

RAPPEL 1910

The authors take us over fifty years back, when the Crippen trial was exciting the masses, and Clara Butt was enchanting opera lovers — when Carrie Tooley was killing music-hall audiences with her songs, while her husband was wooing Dinah Green after choir practice!

Here is a novel of unusual charm and great originality. The authors know their period thoroughly, and have imbued the whole story with wit, suspense and nostalgia.

Also by Caryl Brahms

FOOTNOTES TO THE BALLET
ROBERT HELPMANN
A SEAT AT THE BALLET
THE REST OF THE EVENING'S MY OWN
AWAY WENT POLLY
NO CASTANETS

By Caryl Brahms with S. J. Simon

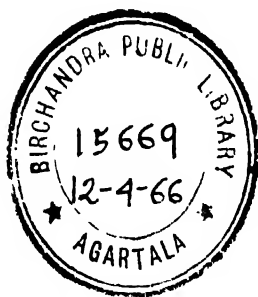
A BULLET IN THE BALLET
CASINO FOR SALE
THE ELEPHANT IS WHITE
ENVOY ON EXCURSION
DON'T MR. DISRAELI
NO BED FOR BACON
NO NIGHTINGALES
TITANIA HAS A MOTHER
SIX CURTAINS FOR STROGANOVA
TROTTE TRUE
TO HELL WITH HEDDA
YOU WERE THERE

By Caryl Brahms and Ned Sherrin

CINDY-ELLA

RAPPEL 1910

Caryl Brahms & Ned Sherrin



W. H. ALLEN
LONDON

There are many anachronisms in this book which we wilfully chose to perpetrate, and indeed of some of them we are rather proud. Many others have been pointed out to us by our pained printer and these we could not give up, for without them there would be no story. To those readers who say there is still no story we would reply that history is like that.

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A Funny Thing to Happen
tò
JULIE and TONY

One

“MONTAGUE TOOLEY, you stand charged upon the indictment with murder, and the particulars state that on the 18th of September 1910 you did murder your wife Caroline Tooley, a music hall artist professionally known as Fairy Felcher; to that charge do you plead guilty or not guilty?”

The little man in the dock looked up to a point above the Judge's head; above the rafters in the courtroom; above the figure of Justice with her scales of stone on the dome of the Old Bailey; above the clouds and into empirium. He spoke quite quietly, quite confidently, to someone who was not the Judge:

“Coming, Carrie,” he said.

Two

IT was the year of the comet.
“Is there anything in the paper this morning, Frederick?”
“Now let me see. . . .”

Since this was January 1910 the chances are that there will be a great deal in the paper. For one thing there was to be a General Election. Mr. Asquith having taken umbrage when the House of Lords refused to pass Lloyd George's Budget, had gone to the country in a huff. If he'd only waited and seen that point of time at which he would always be blowing off into a huff with Lloyd George maybe he would have thought twice about it; or maybe not.

January 1910. A bad month for shipping when you think that on the second the s.s. *Ayrshire*, one day out from Liverpool on the way to Australia, collided with s.s. *Arcadian* of the Ellerman Line in the fog in St. George's Channel. And on the twelfth the South Pacific Railway Company's *Czarina* was

wrecked at Coos Bay, Oregon. And February was not likely to be much better, or so Old Moore said and subsequently patted his Almanac on the back when on the eighth the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's intermediate steamer *Lima* was wrecked at Hiramblu Island off the west coast of South America. Black days at Lloyds! Nothing but Jangle! Jangle! Jangle!

Black days for certain Franco-Swiss insurance companies. Floods in both countries, and by the end of the month half of France under water and the Swiss retreating up their alps as fast as their funiculars would carry them. By the end of the month the Port Royal was under 30 feet of water and the St. Lazare terminus was endangered. Bad days for railways in prospect. Indeed, before many days are over the Minneapolis-Montreal express will be running off the rails; and at Stoa's Rest on the Brighton Railway a coach on the up train will be derailed, seven passengers killed and fifteen injured. Black hours for widows with only the black hours for the life insurance man to provide a silver lining.

And even though it is January 1910, and people know their place, misfortune is no respecter of persons.

*The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
He made them high and lowly
And ordered their estate.*

That month he also burnt down two of their palaces. The Royal Palace at Athens went up in flames on January sixth to the tune of a hundred thousand pounds, and in Constantinople the lucky Turks got rid of the roof over the head of their Parliament, as flames leapt and devoured the Chiragan Palace.

But there was good news from the sale-rooms. At Holme Lacy the Earl of Chesterfield sold a Chippendale mahogany bookcase for 2,000 guineas, and four wood-carvings by Grinling Gibbons for 3,675 guineas. A Boulle writing-table fetched 565 guineas. At Bunny Hall in Nottinghamshire a Hoppner

portrait fetched 8,800 guineas. But then of course it was of Mrs. Parkyns. At Christie's a Turner fetched only 1,120 guineas, but the Ladies and Gentlemen depicted in the garden were anonymous. Supers, as Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree would have called them had they been standing decoratively behind him at His Majesty's Theatre; and not a face well known enough for brother Max to caricature it, unless you count that tall pretty girl Phyllis Neilson-Terry whose height did seem to lend itself to caricature. A good month in the sale-rooms; which makes Mr. Ludwig Mond's gesture in giving 56 pieces by Great Italian Masters to the National Gallery, clearly before the more prudent Mr. Brunner could stop him, the more impressive.

A month of incident. Madame Curie at length succeeded in isolating one-tenth of a milligramme of polonium which no one would believe possessed much greater radio-activity than radium.¹ And Doctor Sheepshanks resigned as Bishop of Norwich, and to the ladies of the diocese it was the end of an era.

"... Now let me see," repeated Frederick Cooper-Jones, who understood the precise significance of all these things and who as head of the household at No. 5 Boscobel Gardens selected every day an item of interest in the *Morning Post* for his Ellaline, sitting on the other side of the teapot, so placid, so confident, to try to grasp.

He found it on page two.

"Marconi's wireless service has made it possible for us to speak to people in Canada."

Ellaline's brow clouded over. Confidence had ebbed.

"But Frederick, we don't know anyone in Canada."

Frederick gave up. "No, my dear," he said, "there's nothing in the paper."

In Greenwich park the old custodians of the new low, long, red brick building, labelled on one side LADIES and on the other

¹ "Quel Bolonium!"

GENTLEMEN, had already thrown open the doors. For them nine o'clock was no rush hour so they gravitated for a little chat towards the dividing privet hedge that separated his bit of green grass from her bit of green grass.

"Anything in the papers this morning, Fred?"

"Yes, Ellaline," he said. It was a ritual. "I've here's a suffragette only got two quid off the visiting justices at Strangeways, after they turned a hosepipe on her in her cell. She asked for a hundred."

"It's a man's world," said Ellaline, and she turned and started muttering her way back to polish her penny-in-the-slots.

"All right," called Fred to the retreating back, "there's nothing in the papers."

And in a house at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue, Mr. Montague Tooley's attention was not engaged by the headline "Joseph Chamberlain returned unopposed for West Birmingham". Meticulously he folded his *Daily Mail*. There was nothing in the paper.

"Mr. Tooley!" Ada the daily opened the door of the dining-room with her elbow and closed it with a kick of her heel. "Shall I take up Mrs. Tooley's tray now?"

"No, Ada, put it on the dumb-waiter. I'll take it up myself this morning. Mrs. Tooley had a very bad night last night. She came home over-excited."

Ada crooked her finger in the golden-syrup tin and sidled it towards her mouth. "They didn't have her name very big on the posters in Camden Town, Mr. Tooley. I wonder she don't complain."

"She does," said Mr. Tooley.

"You can't see Fairy Felcher for Marie Lloyd."

"Put that golden syrup back on the tray, Ada."

Ada took a last lick. "And I think she ought to come on later in the programme. I mean, you've forgotten about her by half way, haven't you?"

"Monty!" Mrs. Tooley's voice came floating down from the bedroom.

"Coming, Carrie," called Mr. Tooley. His voice rose above the *Daily Mail*, above the breakfast table, above Ada, above the gas brackets, above the chiffonier. "Coming, Carrie," he reassured her.

Upstairs Mrs. Tooley shuddered and turned away from the window as he pulled up the holland blinds to let in the light of day. She looked at the breakfast tray. "No, I can't look a kipper in the face this morning, Monty; I just want a strong cup of tea."

"Try, Carrie," said Mr. Tooley. He buttered a piece of toast for her.

"Be a love and put the whole caboodle outside the door. I can't stand the smell of it."

"But Carrie," said Mr. Tooley, quite severely, "it's a wicked waste."

Mrs. Tooley changed the subject. "Don't call me Carrie, you know it upsets me."

"I can't bring myself to say 'Fairy'. I just can't say it."

"Well, don't call me anything. Call me dear, dear." She played with the phrase. "That's funny. That's good! 'Call me dear, dear.' I must tell Clarence Hackey that. He can work it in his patter."

"His turn's too long as it is. He doesn't make me laugh."

"Take a funeral to make you laugh; you should have been there last night when he. . . . Yes, you should have been there last night. Where were you last night? Where were you?"

"But it was Thursday. You know as well as I do Thursday's choir practice. The Messiah."

"The Messiah can do very well without you, but I can't. I need you where I can see you, Monty; you give me confidence. And Gawd knows I can use it at the moment. I feel such a fool singing 'Who were you with last night?' to Robinson Crusoe when I know very well he's alone on the bloody desert island.

I'm a flop without you, Monty. And it's funny really, you so much younger than me."

"Now, Carrie," Mr. Tooley called on his patience, "the pantomime ends on Saturday, and anyway, if we've had this out once we've had it out a thousand times. Thursday night is my night off. I've gone to choir practice on Thursday night ever since we got married."

She pulled him down beside her and ruffled his hair; and if he jerked away from her she didn't seem to notice.

*"Who were you with last night
Out in the pale moonlight? . . ."*

Outside an omnibus rattled by, the horses pacier than usual in an effort to keep warm. A poster ran along the side: "William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes in the 'Speckled Band'." Law-abiding citizens thrilled at the name. On the other side of the bus ran another poster which read "Gerald du Maurier in 'Arsène Lupin'." A policeman on point duty eased his knees. Amateurs again! The direction board at the back of the bus read "Old Ford to Old Bailey". Who could wonder?

"So this, Gentlemen of the Jury, was Mrs. Tooley, professionally known as Fairy Felcher, in January 1910. . . ."

The two fledgling barristers who had dropped in during a moment of longeur in the more fashionable Crippen case next door, looked at one another. "Crime Passionel," said young Rayner Goddard knowledgeably.

Montague Shearman looked depressed. "I don't know much about love," he said, sadly; a piece of self-assessment that was to be proved up to the hilt when some years later Mr. Justice Shearman sentenced Edith Thompson and Frederick Bywaters to death.

There stood Rufus Isaacs, appearing for the Crown, dark, aquiline, impressive. There sat Marshall Hall for the Defence, a large, silver lion with the malleable mouth of an actor. Clearly

he would have some time to wait for his cue. Wordlessly the young men slipped back to Dr. Crippen. Richard Muir, prosecuting, might yet get to the interesting bit about the false teeth this morning. Rufus Isaacs' voice boomed after them through the swinging door.

"... Mature Miss Fairy Felcher may have been, but comely she still was, and in good health. It may be that other artists at the Old Bedford, Camden Town, were billed in larger letters on the posters outside the theatre. It may be that the applause that rang out for other artists was warmer and more prolonged. It may be that the laughter that greeted the comedian in the role of Dame Crusoe rang louder. It may indeed be that Fairy Felcher had chosen a profession that bestowed its highest rewards on artists more talented than she. . . ."

*"Who were you with last night
Out in the pale moonlight? . . ."*

At the Old Bedford, Camden Town, you could hardly see the gilded garlands for the cloud of comfortable smoke that festooned the auditorium and took its time before it drifted up into the dome. Heavy smoke from clays; pungent smoke from cherrywood; smoke without opulence from cheroots and cigarettes; but not from cigars, for this was not a rich and classic pantomime at Drury Lane, only the Bedford Camden Town on the fourth and final Wednesday of the run. It was in the dress-circle, however, a be-toqued and best-bloused audience just as Sickert had so often painted it, for after all it was the pantomime, a treat the children looked forward to all the year round. Not, it must be admitted, "Jack in the Beanstalk", or "Dick Whittington", or "Cinderella", or any good story you could get your teeth into, but it did have an underwater ballet with line upon line of real mermaids crammed into King Neptune's Coral Halls, and all of them swishing their sequined tails while determinedly remaining on their points. It

did have Miss Florrie Forde with her old join-in-the-chorus song hit "Anybody here seen Kelly (Kelly from the Isle of Man)?" in the first act, and in the second act her new join-in-the-chorus song hit, "Flanagan, Flanagan, take me to the Isle of Man again". As she pointed out to Mr. Herman Darewski, the musical director, it really did suit the story of the homesick Robinson Crusoe, marooned on that South Sea island, awfully well. Mr. Darewski had his doubts. He wanted her to sing a song of his; a nice little ditty celebrating the new game Diabolo ("Oh Diabolo! Why did you cross the sea? Why didn't you stay in Gay Paree?" very eloquent); but Miss Forde had been adamant, and now the programme girls were joining in even during the second house, and in spite of their feet.

It did have, as Dame Crusoe, Clarence Hackey whose catchphrase "Don't be late, not tonight", advice given to Dame Crusoe's son Robinson just before he left home for ten years, had taken on all over Camden Town and had been accounted a masterpiece of dramatic irony by a visiting critic. Was it A. B. Walkely, Clement Scott, Max Beerbohm, or would it have been the teenage James Agate? Someone we may be sure who had had trouble finding something to write about. A bad year for plays. Only "Misalliance" by Bernard Shaw; "The Madras House" by Granville Barker; "Justice" by John Galsworthy, and "The Twelve Pound Look" by J. M. Barrie, which anyway only focussed for one act.

It did have Fairy Felcher as the Fairy Sand-dune with two numbers, "Who were you with last night?" and "When the sands of the desert grow cold".

*"Who were you with last night
Out in the pale moonlight?"*

The Fairy Sand-dune waved her wand and down came the song-sheet. But she could rap it with that wand till she was blue in the face, it had no immediate effect on the house. "Now will all the nice little girls and boys give their oranges to the grown-

ups and sing this chorus with me," she coaxed the little bastards. Nobody joined in and the programme girls wandered off to fill up for the interval.

"It wasn't your sister!" she sang with some truth at the small boy, an only child, who was putting his tongue out at her from the stage box.

"It wasn't your Ma!" she sang to the gallery without reaching them. She abandoned her wand-waving and fell back on a wink.

"Oh, oh, oh what a naughty boy you are!" carolled the Fairy Sand-dune.

"She hasn't got much voice, has she?" sniffed the woman in E 17.

"She's got plenty of other things though," said her husband in E 18.

The woman in E 17 looked outraged. "Not before the children!" she said.

The number meandered to a brassy close. The specialty over, it was time to get on with the plot. This was where the Fairy Sand-dune presented Robinson with his crock of gold. The Fairy Felcher retreated into the wings to fetch it. She looked around. It wasn't there. Damn the property master! "Where's my bloody casket!" Good fairies require good stage management.

In the pit, all unaware, Mr. Darewski had started the magic music to an empty stage. Nothing was happening. He repeated it. In E 19 Mr. Montague Tooley woke up to the fact that something had gone wrong. Now Carrie would be in a state. He excused his way past E 18, E 17, and the children.

"Sit down," said E 18.

"Why can't he wait until the interval?" muttered E 17. Mr. Tooley looked over the front stalls, over Mr. Darewski and his orchestra and into the wings.

"Coming, Carrie," he mouthed.

In the park at Greenwich, Fred and Ellaline were closing down

and Fred was returning the mug that only an hour before had been full of the steaming Mazawatee that Ellaline had kindly provided for him. Under the arm of his cardigan he had tucked his copy of *The Globe*.

"Anything in it, Fred?" asked Ellaline.

"'Nuvver cold spell on its way, my dear."

"Oh!"

"What was that you said, Ellaline?"

"I said 'Oh!'"

"Oh. Must have been very chilly for that chap who crossed the channel."

"A swimmer, this time of year?"

"No dear, an aviator.

"Eh?"

"A bloke called Blériot, in his aeroplane."

Ellaline considered it. "I'd rather have a balloon, Fred. It's prettier."

Fred watched her retreating figure, muttering its way through the growing dark, animadverting on the unaccountable ways of the French. It was the problem of aviation that occupied his mind.

"I'd rather have a balloon too," he called after her, "it's safer!"

In the street, bright as any limes, lights like fountains flooded from the naphtha flares on the barrows; and the street vendors like supers in a late-night market scene cried their wares, anything from whelks to bananas, taking in old clothes, new clothes and jellied eels on the way. And through the rumble of the traffic and clip-clop of the cabs and the cries of "Bananas ten a penny!" "Oranges, ripe oranges!" "Fine aspidistras!" and "Potatoes twopence a pound!" rang a voice more sombre and more resonant with a traditional cry not easily to be dismissed.

"Knives to grind!

"Scissors to grind!

"What's to be's to be! What's to be's to be!"

It haunted the mind.

Mr. and Mrs. Montague Tooley emerged from the stage door of the Old Bedford into all this, he buttoning the top button of his neat overcoat; she with a leopard-skin muff, a feather boa and a cloak around her shoulders.

"Good night, Fairy, my dear! Good night, Mr. Felcher," said the fatherly stage-door keeper. Montague Tooley winced.

"Tooley," he reminded him. "The name is Tooley." The growler drew up.

"Good night, Joe. Come on, Monty!"

"Coming, Carrie."

Inside the cab the chiaroscuro of street lamps, naphtha-lit alleys, and dark back streets played over Mr. Tooley sitting there, bolt upright, clasping his rolled umbrella; and played over Fairy, a fine figure of a woman, touching her face to transient life and then shading it, as the cab rattled on, to a silhouette that had a certain bosomy nobility if not elegance. In the light it was her ample warmth and generosity that shone out, in the dark the dominant quality, her womanhood—which at that particular moment was finding full expression. On an impulse she flung her arms around her husband who had been waiting, not without misgivings, for just such a demonstration. She kissed him, there was only one word for it—passionately—on the lips.

"Behave yourself, Carrie, remember the street lamps. People can see in."

"You know you like it."

"The cabby'll be turning round."

"Well, why shouldn't he? I'm your wife, aren't I?"

"Carrie!"

"Oh, all right." She bounced back to her side of the cab and sulkily patted her crowning glory, arranged in sundry curls and tendrils and highlighted with henna. "I don't want to have to do my hair again before the Hackeys come anyway."

"The Hackeys." Mr. Tooley sounded even more depressed. "Are they coming?"

"Of course they are. It's Friday, isn't it?"

"I suppose so. I was looking forward to a quiet night—what's left of it."

"Oh, that's you all over," said Fairy; but she was indulgent rather than cross; and this emboldened Mr. Tooley. "We could put 'em off if they had a telephone," he said, "if we had a telephone," he remembered.

"Put off Clarence Hackey? He's the life and soul of the party!"

"... Clarence and Elvira Hackey, as you will see, Gentlemen of the Jury, were close friends of the Tooleys. Important friends to Mrs. Tooley—to Fairy Felcher—because his position on the Music Halls was so much more secure than hers. To Mr. Tooley a reputation on the Music Halls counted for less. . . ."

A busy junior hurrying into the court dropped his notes. They scattered and slid over the stone floor.

"Hang it!" he said.

The future Lord Goddard, who had slipped out from the Crippen case, again, made a note. "Hang it," it read. "Whip it too," he added as an afterthought.

*"You can't get many pickles on a pound of pickled pork
Whether you live in China,
Japan or Carolina. . . ."*

The life and soul of the party was living up to his reputation at the supper table. He grabbed the pickle pot and juggled with it.

"Stop it, Clarrie! Behave!"

Elvira Hackey turned reproachful eyes on her husband. Even a caution had to be cautioned at times; but her eyes were merry under the elaborate hat with the rolled-up veil. The dressy

blouse, the many rings, the brooch watch, the large earrings, the trinkets, the jewelled hatpins, all bore testimony to the fact that this rather pinched-in little woman, who was once a contortionist, had never regretted giving it up for the less callis-thenic but more affluent life as the wife of a rising comedian.

"Leave him alone, Elvira. It's only his fun!" said Fairy.

Her husband said nothing at all.

"What's wrong with my fun? It's apropos. Nobody can say my jokes aren't appropriate. They may not be funny. They may be a bit 'risquay'. But they are appropriate." True son of his profession, he laughed first and loudest and only at his own jokes.

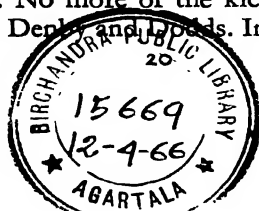
"You've got nothing to fear from the L.C.C.," Fairy reassured him.

"Neither have you, girl," he reassured her. And both felt safer from the new threat of censorship that was brewing in County Hall. Censor George Robey? Censor Jack Pleasants? Censor Marie Lloyd? They'd never dare.

"They're doing it in America," Elvira said, well pleased. She twitched her left ear happily. She knew it made her diamonds shiver.

In America it was a bad year for blue jokes. Though there was no official censorship there was a great deal of private-enterprise prudery on the part of the heads of the variety circuits. In the stalls of the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia a Mr. Benjamin Franklin Keith, "a little man both in stature and mentality", was anxiously raking the muck his new comics were offering. A little man who had no use for people he could not buy and sell, and small use for people when he had bought them.

On stage "Denby and Dodds, the new sophisticates" were running through their act for him. The style of the two-man act was changing. No more of the kick-in-the-belly-spit-out-the-beans stuff for Denby and Dodds. Instead of both dressing



funny they had a gimmick. Only one dressed funny. The other dressed dressy. That was the sophistication.

Mr. Benjamin Franklin Keith gave them a jaundiced look. He was in a bad mood. Only that morning he'd been cornered into making a pre-nuptial settlement of half a million dollars on his new wife.

On stage Denby turned to Dodds:

"I'll never marry a girl who snores," he said.

"You're going to have fun finding out," said Dodds.

They both turned expectantly to Mr. Keith.

"Marriage," he said. "It's dirty—and that goes for mother-in-laws. Cut it!"

Bad days for comics in America.

Anxious days for comics in England. If it was going to be left to the L.C.C. to decide what was funny, empty ninepennies were just around the corner. Fairy saw that Clarrie's glass was empty.

"Monty! Pass the stout."

Her husband said nothing at all.

"Monty! The stout!"

"Penny for 'em, Monty?" Elvira chipped in. She checked her bangles. All there; all seven. She jangled.

"Eh!" Mr. Tooley started. "Oh, I was just thinking it was midnight and high time for bed."

"Monty Tooley, how can you say a thing like that to our guests?"

"I was just thinking aloud."

Carrie was almost in tears, "You've made it worse, Monty!"

Fortunately to one of their guests it was only a cue for a song:

"No offence meant—and therefore none was taken

No offence meant, my answer is complete.

No offence meant, unless I am mistaken

As the Belted Earl said when the girl sat on his country seat."

Clarrie came out of his song and turned, full of goodwill, to his host. "I'll tell you something that'll interest you," he said. Mr. Tooley's heart sank.

"I've got a new piece of business, Monty. It's a very funny piece of business. It'll kill you!"

Mr. Tooley looked apprehensive.

"It goes like this. I'm sitting on a tree-trunk in front of a rustic drop, and do you know what I do?"

Mr. Tooley wasn't trying, "No, Clarrie," he said.

"I'll tell you. I cut my toe nails with a pair of shears."

"He does you know," said Elvira.

"And every time I throw away a toe nail I get a bang on the drum." He paused for effect. "Of course, it's a false foot."

Mr. Tooley's worst fears were confirmed.

"It's very funny, Monty, don't you think? No? Oh well, no offence meant!"

There was one of those silences. The little repeating brooch-watch on Fairy's lapel started up, "Ach! du lieber Augusteine" it tinkled unpatriotically.

"Made in Germany," said Elvira disapprovingly. She sniffed. It was a prelude to its little tinkling strike.

"There you are," said Monty, "what did I tell you, midnight."

But it was half-past twelve before the Hackeys called their last "goodnight" down Elgin Avenue and Mr. Tooley was able to shut the front gate thankfully behind them.

"Thank goodness they've gone!"

"Monty!"

"Some people don't know when they've overstayed their welcome."

Fairy stopped tidying the table and gave him a straight look. "They're my friends and I like to have them round me."

"Come on, let's clear these plates away. It's no good leaving them for Ada or we'll never get any breakfast in the morning".

Very carefully Mr. Tooley began scraping the remnants of herring on to one plate and packing the others neatly together,

Fairy stood at the foot of the stairs, impatient to mount them.

"Let's just stack 'em on the dumb-waiter. I mean, otherwise what do we pay a skivvy for?" Monty would be all night getting to bed if she didn't go back and bustle him on. Still, no good making a scene about it. . . .

"Till the sands of the desert grow cold," she hummed hopefully.

". . . 'And their infinite number are told? . . .' Monty, why don't you try and like Clarrie a bit more? Everybody else thinks he's a perfect scream."

"I suppose he's all right. I just don't like him very much. He's so noisy."

"Noisy? He's a comic! You'll be calling me noisy next!" She laughed wholeheartedly, throwing back her head and shaking her fine shoulders.

Mr Tooley looked at her reproachfully. "Something comes over you when you've been with the Hackeys. They've got no refinement."

"Whatever are you talking about?"

"I like a woman to be refined, Carrie."

"Well, you can't say they don't dress well. I'm sure Clarrie looks every inch a gentleman." She lowered the gaslight.

"He's got the money." And if he looked a little sad she didn't notice.

". . . And did you see Elvira's new hat? Mind, I don't think she ought to wear a bird of paradise. She can't carry her feathers like I can. She hasn't got the height!" The little man looked up at her.

"You always wear your clothes well, Carrie. You've got the build for it."

"Was that why you married me?" A note of tenderness softened that boisterous voice. Nothing disturbed the flatness of Mr. Tooley's.

"You were such a lively woman, Carrie. You woke me up a bit."

"I can always wake you up when I want to you know, Monty."

There was triumph in Fairy's smile as she enveloped him. "Can you?" he said, breaking away, "Oh, I expect you're right."

"Of course I can. Oh, leave the rest, it's time for bye-byes now. Come on."

"You go on up, Carrie. I've got a few things to do in the den. I won't be long."

"No. 'Don't be late—not tonight,' " she chuckled. "That's Hackey's material." She started singing it.

"You always seem to have a song for every occasion, Carrie."

"Don't be late, not tonight!

Don't be late, not tonight!

I'll be waiting at the gate when

The clock in the steeple

Tells all good people

That it's ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR!

FIVE! SIX! SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE! TEN!"

The voice went away upstairs and she banged the bedroom door on the *TEN!* with the natural timing that seemed to elude her on the stage.

Alone downstairs, Mr. Tooley sighed with relief. He closed the door very quietly behind him and crossed the passage to his sanctum. It smelt musty. It smelt of damp; but it was his sanctum. He looked at the busy, faded wallpaper thankfully. He liked to call it his den. In principle Carrie never came here. In practice this was not so because Carrie, when the mood was on her, would go anywhere and was not to be denied. So the little book that Mr. Tooley now produced had a decorative silver lock on it. He felt for the key in the bottom of his case of sacred music (Carrie never penetrated there) and he came upon it, safely wedged between "Elijah" and "Ave Maria" as he knew it would be. Lovingly he unlocked the little book.

His heart had its secret

His life its mystery. . . .

For like Verlaine, Mr. Tooley had the soul of a poet; but unlike Verlaine he never published. He kept the secrets and the mysteries of his soul to himself.

He selected from his pencil-case the pen with the Esther Brook Relief nib. He started to write slowly, meticulously. He started to get down the words that had been floating in his mind during those silences of his at supper. They were simple words and as he wrote his face relaxed into a smile. Mr. Tooley loved his poetry.

*Carrie,
We were all right for each other,
I wonder what it was went wrong?*

Back into the ink-well went the Esther Brook Relief nib.

*Carrie,
You made me feel like a lover
What came over us?*

The pen stopped scratching. Mr. Tooley looked at the pale green glow from the gaslight for inspiration. He found it in the green-glass shade.

*Carrie,
I loved to sit here and look at you
Look at you the whole day long. . . .*

Scratch! Scratch! More ink.

*Somehow
Now it hurts me to look at you
What came over us?*

Suddenly he started to scribble furiously. Inspiration had come and Esther Brook found no relief.

RAPPEL 1910

*You were all the roses in the garden
I hardly dared to beg your pardon
Let alone your hand;
Where have all the roses gone to?
What foolishness have we moved on to?
I do not understand. . . .*

"Monty!" It was the voice from upstairs, in bed and waiting, as he knew she must be.

"Yes, Carrie."

"Have you put the guard in front of the fire?"

"Yes, Carrie."

"Have you turned all the lights out?"

"I'm just doing it, Carrie."

"Well, don't be all night about it!"

"No, Carrie."

The hungry voice upstairs was appeased. The flat voice downstairs was silent. The scratching started again.

*Carrie,
You were such a lot of fun once
Taught me things I did not know.
Carrie . . .*

Now for the glory of the poem

*. . . We turned two stars into one once—
What came over us?
Now two into one won't go.*

Mr. Tooley sighed with an artist's satisfaction and read the poem over and put in the punctuation. Then he put the pen with the Esther Brook Relief nib away, locked his book and put that away, put the key away, closed the door and felt that he had put his soul away.

"Monty!"

"Coming, Carrie," he said.

Three

“Is there anything in the paper this morning, Frederick?”
“Now let me see. . . .”

At No. 5, Boscobel Gardens, Frederick Cooper-Jones gave the matter his full attention.

Good days for Liberals. February the fourteenth was a particularly good day. Victory at the polls, what a Valentine! Admittedly it was only a majority of two, but that was better than a minority of one.

Good news for windows. The suffragettes announced that they would suspend militant tactics for a while.

Good days in the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division. Plenty of work from the Sackville-Wests. Ernest Henry asked for a declaration that he was the legitimate son of Lionel, Lord Sackville and Josefa de Ortega, a Spanish ballet-dancer. It appeared that Lord Sackville had lived with her . . . no subject to discuss with Ellaline, but Frederick read on . . . and he had registered their children as legitimate. So far, so good, but now

it appeared that this chivalrous official gesture was simply to save Josefa's feelings. Marriage was rendered impossible by the existence of her husband. Plea dismissed. Not such a good day for Ernest Henry; but then it couldn't be a good day for everybody. Balloons? Yes. Mr. J. Durville and Mr. C. Pollock crossed the Irish Sea in one. They left Dublin at 10 a.m. and arrived at Macclesfield at 3. Speed! Speed! Speed!

Good news for the unemployed. Frederick decided to read it aloud, to Ellaline, the earnest seeker after truth, across the breakfast bacon.

"Winston Churchill made a speech."

"What about, Frederick?" She was with him so far.

"He's opened eighty Labour Exchanges my dear."

She knit her brow in an attempt to grapple with the new concept.

"What is a Labour Exchange?"

"Damned Socialist nonsense."

She considered it. She gave it up. "And who is this Mr. Churchill?"

"He's a Liberal this year, my dear. Never trust a fellah with red hair."

"No, Frederick," said Ellaline.

And at Epping Forest the hot-head red-head, who was not to be trusted, had just opened the last of the few. There would be 230 Labour Exchanges open by June he had said in his speech. He stepped into the de Dion Bouton and went roaring off hell-for-leather at 15 m.p.h.¹ to get back to the bright lights (he had tickets for "The Dollar Princess"). But he nearly came to grief around the first corner. A figure, tall and imposing, with an astrakhan collar and a lot of long hair splayed out over it like a Spy caricature of Martin Harvey, just got back on the pavement in time to give the vehicle a withering glance as it mounted the

¹ Speed! Speed! Speed!

opposite pavement. He was an actor, and a withering glance was his speciality.

Proceeding on his way, he saw the small crowd outside the Labour Exchange. Was it perhaps some place of entertainment, a future source of work? His pulse quickened at the sight of civic dignitaries, a buzz of excitement, and what looked unmistakably like a queue.

He elbowed his way to the front of it and came upon a counter, a grille and what must be the lady box-office clerk.

"What are you giving tonight?" he enquired.

"Oh, we're giving this afternoon," said the box-office lady.

"Ah, matinees only, like Miss Elizabeth Robins at the Court. I don't know that I'd care for Ibsen."

"Do you want to sign on then?" said the box-office lady, who didn't care for Ibsen either.

Sign on? She must be the manager. He prided himself on his quick thinking. A manager and she had recognised him. This was a bit of luck.

"One pound ten for a single man," she informed him.

He took the pen quickly. It was more than he got on tour with the Terrys. It wouldn't be much of a part with no audition, but still—he signed. It was the only way. He looked more like Martin Harvey than ever. He gazed trustingly at the face of his new manager. He'd never worked for a woman before though he'd heard good things of Miss Horniman in Manchester.

"My name, Dear Lady," he said, "is C. Easthope Wanderer."

"Block capitals," said his new manager, no autograph hunter.

"When do I start, Dear Lady?"

His manager bristled, "Come back next Tuesday at the same hour and you'll 'ave the same amount."

She didn't seem pleased. Had he put a foot wrong; and that flying H? He'd heard good things of Lilian Bayliss in the Waterloo Road, perhaps she had a sister. He plucked up his courage.

"But when do we try it out, Dear Lady?"

"Joe," said the lady manager, "this bloke's annoying me."

C. Easthope Warrender beat a hasty retreat. He was puzzled, but with one pound ten in his sovereign purse he was fairly happy. He was unsure of the precise nature of his engagement, but the money was all right. A good day for actors! He hastened away to tell his friends.

At the Britannia Hoxton, Fairy Felcher was working for her money. Striding up and down the stage and trying to top the brass with

"Fall in and follow me! POM! POM! POM!

Fall in and follow me! POM! POM! POM!

Down in the pit the man on the trumpet threw a reproachful look at the man on the drums. "The drums should be tacit on the eighth bar," he hissed.

"The singer should be tacit all the time," retorted the drummer, a realist.

Judging by the thin applause, there were many in the house who agreed with the man on the drums; though goodness knows Fairy had expended herself on their behalf. Up in the dressing-room she sank thankfully on to a hard chair and looked around for Monty, but it was Thursday, and if she wanted a glass of stout she had to slip across the road and get it for herself. Oh well!

There was a smart rapping on the door, "It's me, Elvira; I'm coming in, dear."

"Do," said Fairy. "What, another new hat?" Interest had drawn her from her fatigue. "You are a swell."

Elvira viewed herself in the long dressing-room mirror and inclined her head. Queen Alexandra could not have done it more graciously or Mrs. George Keppel with more confidence. "Yes, it is nice, isn't it," she agreed. "It's a present from Clarence. He's playing the Tivoli this week for the first time. He's never played three halls before."

"He must be as busy as Albert Chevalier," said Fairy.

"He will be some day."

"He must be tired out by the time he gets home."

Elvira winked. "I haven't noticed it, dearie," she said.

Fairy's depression set in again—"Play a house like this and it kills you."

Elvira patted her friend's shoulder, "Well, I didn't see Monty out front so I came round dear."

"It's Thursday. He's got his choir practice. I'm never any good when I know he's not there."

"I know what you mean, dear." Elvira sat down beside her. "I was just the same when I was doing my contortions; if Clarrie wasn't standing right in the wings where I could see him I couldn't as much as get my leg around my neck, let alone hang on by my teeth." Two faces gazed into the long green looking-glass that ran the length of the trestle table. One, full and rounded, painted yet somehow unfulfilled; the other painted, pointed, sparrowlike and very assured under the violet velvet hat. "Can't get along without 'em, can we, dear?" said the painted, pointed sparrow.

"Monty's so quiet, that's what I can't make out."

"It's the quiet ones you've got to watch, my dear. Does he always go off hymn singing on Thursdays?"

"Always has."

"And who goes off with him singing?"

Not a muscle gave. It wasn't Fairy's night for jokes. "I wouldn't like Clarrie to go off like that," said Elvira.

"Well it's church . . . almost."

"Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Halle-lu!

Halle-lu!

Halle-lu-jah!"

sang the Kilburn and Brondesbury Choral Society wholeheartedly; which is of course by no means the same thing as

altogether. For the conscientious choir-master, Mr. Perkins, it had been another of his tactful evenings. "Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen," he said; "I think we can say that we are making progress. But let us remember our dotted crotchets. Perhaps a little jingle that Mrs. Perkins composed for her sight-singing class will help us:

*"Singers worth their salt must watch it
Always count your dotted crotchet."*

The usual polite laughter greeted Mrs. Perkins's gem.

"We meet again next Thursday at seven o'clock. Seven o'clock sharp, please."

The choral society broke up into hungry individuals thinking about their supper. Tenors collected the music cases of sopranos, baritones took the arms of contraltos and the one basso-profundo, a proud capture, pom-pommed independently out into the night. One neat little soprano, her floppy hat trimmed with pretty mauve ribbons, satin both sides, must have forgotten her music. She had almost reached the door when the gentlemanly high baritone caught up with her.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Tooley, "you've forgotten your Messiah."

Two blue eyes opened at their widest. Almost they might have belonged to a china doll. "Oh, so I have," said the neat little soprano, "I am a silly. I'm always leaving things behind. Thank you so much."

"Not at all."

"Well—thank you."

"Oh . . . a . . . goodnight. Goodnight Miss —?"

"Green, Dinah Green."

*"Bedelia, I want to steal you,
Bedelia, you are my Queen.
I'll be your Hayden Coffin
If you'll be my Evie Green. . . ."*

Fairy had come down from the dressing-room with Elvira to watch Clarrie from the wings. It was wonderful what life he gave that old chestnut. "Clarrie's in good form tonight, Elvira."

"He always is on Thursdays dear. It's after Wednesdays." She winked.

"Very lively," said a flat voice behind. "Are you ready, Carrie?"

"Oh, Monty, you got here after all! Were you out front?"

"No, I just got here in time to take you home."

"Oh, well, that's nice," said Fairy. If looks could speak, hers would have said to Elvira, "There you are—church, that's all it is."

As they moved away from the stage she slipped her arm into his and happily hummed along with Clarence Hackey, "Oh Bedelia, elia, elia, I've made up my mind to steal yer. . ."

The pass door slammed on them and Clarrie was cut off.

"Your cab's waiting, Miss Felcher."

"Thank you, George. Oh, Monty, it's a lovely night! Breathe it in dear, do you good." Obediently Mr. Tooley breathed in the night air with its dust (bad for a baritone's throat), its raucous cries, its sweet smell of fruit and cabbages.

*"If you'll be my Hayden Coffin
I'll be your Evie Green. . . ."*

sang Fairy seductively, settling herself back in the cab. The smells of the street gave way to the musty smell of the cab, which was fast losing ground to the Jockey Club perfume of Mrs. Tooley.

"Dinah Green," murmured Mr. Tooley from the shadows on his side. "It's a pretty name."

"It's Evie dear. *Evie* Green."

"Yes dear," said Mr. Tooley wearily. "Just as you say." And as the cab turned the corner a voice from the barrows floated after them,

"Knives to grind!

"Scissors to grind!

"What's to be's to be! What's to be's to be!"

"Is there anything in the paper this morning, Frederick?" Although Ellaline Cooper-Jones put it in the form of a question it was a question which, judging from the size of the paper, practically demanded the answer "yes!"

But Frederick only rattled the paper fiercely. For one thing it was not his paper. The *Morning Post* had departed under the City-bound arm of No. 4 Boscobel Gardens before he had discovered the paper boy's mistake. For another it was *The Times* which he had never been able to find his way about. Finally there seemed to be nothing in the paper except the state opening of parliament.

"The gale and rainstorms of the early morning gave place to mild and dry weather; and promising gaps in the clouds gave an occasional glimpse of blue sky. If cheers were less than usual the raising of hats and the waving of handkerchiefs were general. The King and Queen bowed incessantly from Buckingham Palace to the Victoria Tower."

"Very gracious," said Ellaline, buttering her toast happily. This was better value than she usually got. "What was the Queen wearing?"

"Well now, let me see," said Frederick, almost his old indulgent self. "She wasn't in the first carriage—six bays; the pages of honour were in that. Silver-Stick in Waiting was in the second; Sir Dighton Probyn, Keeper of the Privy Purse was in the third. Sound chap Sir Dighton."

"But the Queen?" said Ellaline.

"We're coming to that, I think," said Frederick; he held the paper a little higher. "She wasn't in the fourth State landau (six bays) with Gold-Stick in Waiting; she wasn't in the fifth State landau, the four blacks were drawing the Woman of the Bed-chamber, the Master of the Horse, the Lady in Waiting and the Mistress of the Robes . . . in that. . . ."

"Ah, the Robes!" said Ellaline.

"In the sixth coach . . . The Old State Coach with eight cream horses," said Frederick, "His Majesty wore the uniform of a Field Marshal with the Greatcoat," he added.

"But what about the Queen?"

"It doesn't say—they hung strips of red baize from the Home Office window y'know. . . ."

. . . The King had needed that Greatcoat the day before. The rain and the gales had gone but the chill still hung in the air that blew that red baize which made the Home Office look like. . . . His Majesty stopped himself from remembering one of his Parisian brothels. Of course there was a new chap at the Home Office. Winston Churchill. Pretty American mother. His Majesty acknowledged the cheers. As the eight cream horses pulled the old State Coach round the corner of Parliament Street and Bridge Street the band of the Life Guards struck up the National Anthem. His Majesty tried to close his ears to it, but it was no good. He wondered how many times he had heard it. He wished he had had a woman for each time. Perhaps he had. He wished he had his dog Caesar with him. He didn't see why a dog, undeniably a part of the King's Household, shouldn't be part of a procession. Maybe he would be one day; and he could put his hand down for the warm lively nose to nuzzle, between raising it to acknowledge the cheers.

The anthem didn't seem to be worrying Alexandra; she was more than a little deaf already. She was bowing too, not quite in time with him.

"God Save our Gracious King!"

Our King didn't feel at all gracious at that moment. What with the bells of St. Margaret's clanging away like a Royal wedding, and they had had enough of them in the family already, speeches, speeches, speeches; and what with Major W. A. Robinson in St. James's Park giving "BB" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery the command to fire a 41-gun salute, and

the Life Guards and the loyal subjects and Mrs. George Keppel in a very strange mood last night¹ and the peers making fools of themselves and Asquith in and out of the palace every other day he wondered if it had been worth waiting all those years on the chance that Mama would die first. She had, and look where it had landed him.

"God Save the King," played yet another band in Parliament Square. "God Save the King!" yelled a royalist through a megaphone. "Votes for women!" shouted a suffragette, rather louder and without artificial assistance. What was all the fuss about? His Majesty pondered. A woman's place was in the home; preferably upstairs and in a tea gown. . . .

"But what was the Queen wearing?" pleaded Ellaline.

Frederick pushed aside his full cup. A skin of milk had formed itself across the cooling coffee. "Well now, let's see," he said.

"The Lords were seated as to rank. They were seen in the original form, as it appeared at the very dawn of the constitution; when it was an assembly of wise men, presided over by the Sovereign to discuss without prejudice or predilection the matters of concern to the common weal."

There was of course one big difference between February the 21st, 1910, and the dawn of the constitution. The presence of peeresses, with white plumes in their hair. Their court dresses, largely shades of blue, green, red and purple, were made by Worth and Lucille and worn by the English noblewomen, whether by birth or by Gaiety, elegantly. It could only have been envy that bent the smiles of those professionally well-groomed, continentally well-dressed women, the ambassadors' wives; Their Excellences the Countess Beckendorff, Madame de Villa Urrutia and Madame Kato. And even they were outshone by the Lords Spiritual who had abandoned their customary black with lawn sleeves for their state robes of crimson with

¹ Alice, where wert thou?

long ermine hoods and the Lord Justices of Appeal in Black and Gold and the other judges in Scarlet and White.

"Two chairs of state stood empty on the canopied dais, decorated with gold and colours. The Prince and Princess of Wales sat on low chairs on either side."

The Princess who had bought a flowered toque that morning was thinking what a pity she couldn't wear it with her pearl-grey costume—which needed something to cheer it up a bit. Ah well! Ascot. Prince George wore his parliamentary robes as a Duke. He was thinking of the sea and a good glass of beer and was wondering if dear Papa would die first and whether the waiting would be worth while. He looked across at Prince Henry of Prussia who was wearing his uniform as an Admiral of the Fleet of the British Navy. Good chap Henry; not such a trouble maker as Uncle Wilhelm.

"But Frederick, what was the Queen wearing?"

"Have patience, Ellaline. She hasn't entered the chamber yet." He read on.

"First came the Pursuivants and Heralds in their gold and crimson tabards. Then Blue Mantle and Rouge Croix, side by side. Then Rouge Dragon followed with Portcullis. Then came the President of the Board of Agriculture, Lord Carrington, bearing aloft the great sword of state with crimson scabbard. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Crewe, carried the Imperial Crown sparkling on its velvet cushion. There followed the Cap of Maintenance, a peaddress of crimson velvet upturned with ermine, carried by Lord Winchester, Hereditary bearer, and finally there entered His Majesty the King, in rich crimson velvet, edged with gold lace and with a long mantle of powdered ermine, leading the Queen by his right hand."

"Give me the paper," said the Lady Macbeth of Boscobel Gardens.

"The Queen wore a gown of similar material and design as the King but not so flowing,"

she read. "Oh!" she said, bitterly disappointed.

"Never mind, dear," Frederick patted her hand, "we can't have everything."

". . . Give me the paper," said the Lady Macbeth of Greenwich Park. "I'm doin' me best," said Fred; but he handed it over. Ella knew just where to look.

"The Queen wore a black dress, embroidered with gold and silver. Her robe of ruby velvet was embroidered with gold and lined with minever."

She stopped. "What's minever, Fred?" Fred shook a puzzled head and she read on—

"She wore a small crown of diamonds with a Honiton lace veil, several strings of pearls, the Cullinan diamond, the Garter and the King's Coronation order."

Ellaline handed back the paper. "Ought'er be enough on a cold day," she said.

"A damned cold day," thought His Majesty as he threw back his robes disclosing the scarlet of a Field Marshal's warm winter uniform, which did nothing for a stomach. "My Lords, pray be seated," said the King.

Theodore Roosevelt, the official American representative, checked the gesture that would have drawn the tails of his frock coat round his legs. A cold day indeed. "Oh for New York," he sighed. "A quick drive up Broadway, a little ticker tape and it was all over." But already the guttural accent had embarked on the King's speech so Mr. Roosevelt cleared his mind of it and went through the main points of the Romanes Lecture that he was about to deliver at Oxford.

"My relations with all Foreign Powers continue to be friendly," opened the King. He looked at Prince Henry of Prussia. He looked away again. But this was not what the Lords had turned out in such numbers to hear or what the Commons were jostling at the Bar of the House to learn. At least they'd

written him a short speech; a bit about South Africa, a bit about the Prince of Wales's tour and then the bombshell. "Recent experience has disclosed serious difficulties due to recurring differences of strong opinion between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. . . ." Asquith had insisted that he should make it quite clear that the Commons were to have a free hand with money matters (Dear Mama had taught him how valuable that could be) and the last word over the Lords all the time. (Mrs. Keppel had shown him the importance of the last word only last night.¹) The peers looked at each other with wild surprise. His Majesty decided to quit while the going was good. "I pray the blessing of God Almighty may attend your labours," he said, starting off down the steps. Ah well, tonight he was going to see Gertie Millar in "Our Miss Gibbs" at the Gaiety. True he would have to trail along Alexandra, Princess Victoria and the Henry Prussias; still it was better than "Tristan" with Fraulein Fassbender at Covent Garden.

At the Old Bailey in one of the long pauses in which Rufus Isaacs shuffled his brief determinedly, young Rayner Goddard leant across to young Montague Shearman. "I've got tickets for 'The Chocolate Soldier,'" he whispered, "Amy Augard!" Montague Shearman failed to brighten. He only had tickets for Covent Garden and although the Opera was "Salome", he was prepared to bet that Mademoiselle Aino Acté would not lose her veils to half the purpose of Maude Allen at the Palace.

Rufus Isaacs found his place, ". . . And what is Miss Fairy Felcher, a woman in her prime, asking of her husband? No more than any married woman in this court would expect of hers. His arm to escort her to their mutual home. His affection upon their arrival there. In fact, and in the fullest sense of the word—his love. And what was Mr. Tooley's answer? To seek the companionship of another woman under the apparent respectability of oratorio. . . ."

¹ "No," she had said.

“... *Halle-lu-jah!*”

sang the Kilburn and Brondesbury Choral Society after another week's practice: still wholeheartedly, still by no means the same thing as altogether. Once more Mr. Perkins's tact had survived. “Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I think we can say that we are making progress. But let us remember our tied minims.” The choir shuffled its feet guiltily. “Perhaps a little jingle that Mrs. Perkins composed for her sight singing class will help us.

*“If you hope one day to win him,
Ladies don't untie your minims”.*

He looked up expectantly. The choir relaxed. Another Thursday evening open-throatedly achieved. It tittered politely. “We meet again next Thursday at seven o'clock. Seven o'clock sharp, please.”

One neat little soprano, her chic sailor straw trimmed with a pink band, made for the door. “Miss Green,” said a gentlemanly high baritone, “you've left your Messiah behind again.”

“Oh, Mr. Tooley, so I have. I am a silly.”

“Allow me to place it in your music case.”

And having carefully slipped it in between “Though Poor be Thy Dwelling” and “Love Divine all Loves Excelling”, he tucked the leatherette case under his arm and followed her through the door of the Church Hall of St. Michael and All the Angels.

They hesitated for a moment on the edge of the pavement before crossing the road. Conversation was impossible until a passing bus had rumbled on its way. “Lewis's wonderful velveteen; rich, warm and durable. 2/- a yard” proclaimed a lady with an hour-glass figure who decorated the billboard that ran along one side. “KOKO FOR THE HAIR” ran the billboard on the other side, “supplied by Special Royal Commands to H.I.M. The Empress of Russia.”¹ Complacently Dinah

¹ She had a problem.

Green patted the curls peeping out from beneath her boater. Sadly Mr. Tooley placed his bowler over the shiny little bald-spot that was increasing at the back of his head.

"Which way do you go?" asked Miss Green.

"Which way do you go?" countered Mr. Tooley.

"Up the High Street and then I turn off."

"So do I."

"I turn off at the corner by the Bodega."

Kilburn was quiet again, quiet enough for conversation, only the clipper-clopper of a hansom carrying a lady home up Shoot-up Hill—or was she a lady? "I'm shuch a shilly when the moon comesh out," she was singing.

"Tricky bit for baritones at the beginning I thought," said Mr. Tooley, "Pom-pom-pom-pom," he hummed.

"The sopranos go up to high C. Mrs. Perkins couldn't manage it, but I can get high C as easy as easy."

"Like a beli."

"Mr. Perkins is a bit of a martinet, isn't he?"

"I admire a man who can keep people up to it."

"Those silly rhymes his wife makes up."

"It's all part of the man."

"I'd never have thought of that. It's very clever of you, Mr. Tooley."

Mr. Tooley chuckled modestly. He was comfortably cushioned with admiration. But suddenly Miss Green pulled the cushions away.

"This is where I turn off, Mr. Tooley."

Mr. Tooley's face fell. How could he detain her? He thought wildly. "Already?" he said.

Miss Green stopped and turned that china doll face up at him. A cushion or so came back. "I've got one of my apple turnovers in the oven."

"Did you make it yourself?"

"Oh yes, I enjoy cooking. It is such a change from the ribbon department. . . ."

"It would be that."

". . . Though that's quite an artistic sort of post. I enjoy matching the shades of pink. It's the fashionable colour for ribbons this year." Her pale face was quite pink with the prettiness of the concept.

"That would explain the smart pink ribbons on your hat last Thursday."

"Mauve," she said, "but I'm glad you noticed. I wish that mauve would come back. Oh well," she sighed, and started to move away again.

Mr. Tooley felt the cushions being withdrawn once more. His brief reprieve was over, "It's very early," he said desperately, "would you care for a little refreshment?"

"I don't think I should," she looked up, aghast, at the Bodega. "Not in a public house."

"Oh, it's quite all right Miss Green. I take my wife to the Bodega."

Mr. Tooley's wife was striding up and down on the stage of the Paragon in the Mile End Road. It wasn't much fun being an extra turn, but Fairy Felcher had some new material and she meant to work it.

*"I'll meet you at the Bodega!
My own sweet country maid.
I'll treat you at the Bodega!
If it's only to a sherry and a lemonade.
I'll meet you at the Bodega
My own, my heart's delight,
I'll meet you, treat you, lovingly I'll greet you
At the Bodega, at nine o'clock tonight!"*

In the wings Daisy Dormer, making rapid repairs in a shower of powder, turned to Whit Cunliffe, who was flicking the powder off his shoulders. "Oh my! Fairy's flat tonight," she said.

"Not physically she ain't!" he said. He hitched up his trousers.

"May I suggest a hock and seltzer Miss Green." They were leaning back against the leather and mahogany alcove. "It cheers but not inebriates you know," Mr. Tooley encouraged.

"Hock! I'd never have the courage." The blue eyes dared to take a quick look round. "They say sherry's good for the voice."

"Then sherry be it," said Mr. Tooley largely.

"And lemonade," urged Miss Green. "Sherry and lemonade please."

*"... I'll treat you at the Bodega
If it's only to a sherry and a lemonade. . . ."*

Mr. Tooley brought the drinks back. "One sherry, one sherry and lemonade," he itemised; but his absence had given Miss Green time to observe the advertisement for Eiffel Tower lemonade, hand painted on a glass panel. "Two gallons for fourpence halfpenny." The beverage was harmless enough, but the Eiffel Tower was unmistakably in Paris and one thing did lead to another. The moral reflection that this gave rise to was painful indeed. "Oh, Mr. Tooley, I wouldn't like you to think me fast."

Mr. Tooley looked shocked. "Oh, never!"

"It's the first time I've been to the Bodega with a married man. It's the first time I've been to the Bodega."

But Mr. Tooley's attitude was most reassuring.

"The Bodega's quite a family house, Miss Green. You needn't mind being seen here."

"Oh, I know, Mr. Tooley. You said you bring your wife here or I'd never have come."

There was a moment of silence between them as a girl with the shiny face and scraped back hair that denote a woman of virtue and more particularly a soldier of the Salvation Army, booted and bonneted, made her way about the tables smiling

politely and attempting her difficult task of grabbing sinners without causing a disturbance. She slipped her pamphlet on Mr. Tooley's table, smiled nervously, and passed on.

"I'm so glad you did come, Miss Green."

Miss Green's fingers fiddled with the pamphlet, but her mind was still on the moral problem. "Your wife never comes to choir practice, does she, Mr. Tooley?"

"She's working."

"Working? Oh?"

"She's a singer."

"Soprano?"

"You're leaving your sherry," Mr. Tooley insisted very gently.

"And lemonade!"

They giggled.

*"... I'll meet you, treat you, lovingly I'll greet you
At the Bodega at nine o'clock tonight. . . ."*

Fairy lacked Wilkie Bard's unique ability to get an audience to join in and so by the time she stamped off into the long dressing-room she was in no mood for good advice from Daisy Dormer. She had an idea or two of her own about what it was the audiences wanted in the Mile End Road. "Dirt," she said, "and if that's what they want, I'll give it to 'em."

"You?" said Daisy Dormer. "Who d'you think you are? Marie Lloyd? You go and practise on your voice instead."

Fairy flared up. "It's not my voice. It's my material. I'd give the world to get my teeth into a song. A real song. A good song," she sniffed. "A bit of dirt, that's all they want." Tears came easily to Fairy's eyes. She stood there, large and painted and sweating and finally silent; and her face was so sad that it was an intrusion to look at it, and Daisy Dormer had bent double over the skip of costumes she was packing by the time Elvira put her overdecorated head around the door.

"Why, what's up?" she said, "what's the matter, Fairy? Tell

Elvira." She turned on Daisy Dormer. "What you been saying to upset her?" Daisy Dormer filled the gap. "There's nothing the matter, Elvira. It's just that she wants to go dirty. Innuendos and all that, and I've advised her against it."

"So I should think," said Elvira. "Dirt's done for—if it was ever a good thing, and that I doubt. It's possible to be very suggestive in a contortion act, but I never was. Every time I looked between my legs I just kissed my fingers to the gallery. That isn't dirty. It's romantic. With your face and your figure, Fairy, you've got to concentrate on Romance. Dirt was last year, it's old fashioned and the L.C.C.'s dead against it."

"They'll be more against it after yesterday," said Daisy Dormer. "Two women got their seats on the Council, Marylebone and Central Hackney."

"And fifty-eight Progressives were elected," said Elvira, "that'll put an end to free speech."

At the biggest house in the Pantages circuit on the West Coast of America a little man was hammering nails into a large board backstage. "Remember this theatre caters to ladies and gentlemen and children," said the board sternly. "Vulgarity will not be tolerated. Check with the manager before using any material you have any doubt about. Don't use the words hell, damn, devil, cockroach, spit."

"That'll curb them," said Mr. Alexander Pantages in a Greek accent that twenty years in America had done little to modify. He rubbed his hands and took up his position in the wings ready to enjoy the evening performance. A clean contortionist, a clean conjurer, a clean trick cyclist. The board had certainly worked. Now he was sitting back to enjoy clean Miss Marie Cahill, a great English lady of the vaudeville boards if ever there was one; but what was she saying in this extraordinary accent of hers? She looked at her Feed.

"Freda never married, did she?" said the Feed, a large girl with a mop of auburn hair.

"No," said Marie, "Freda never married, her children wouldn't let her."

Alexander Pantages jumped off his chair and bounced up and down in his rage until Miss Cahill came off. "You're fired!" he said, "No hell, no damn, no devil, no cockroach, no spit. . . ."

"And where does it say 'no bastard' you bastard?" Miss Cahill swept off.

"Here we are again," said Mr. Tooley. He sounded quite jovial, "One sherry and one sherry and lemonade."

But Miss Green had been reading the pamphlet left by the Salvation Lady. On one side it said, "Can't you give up this drink habit. It brings nothing but ruin," and on the other, "Drunkard's saved secretly. Any lady may prove it at home. Costs nothing to try. Sample free."

"This really must be the last, Mr. Tooley," she said. "That picture over there'll be swinging round."

Mr. Tooley focussed, then he smiled knowledgeably. "It's the Coliseum by moonlight," he said.

"Oh?"

He was touched that she did not know.

"Rome," he elaborated, "the capital city of Italy, is built on seven hills."

"Oh, Mr. Tooley, you talk like a book."

"Yes, Miss Green, a guide-book. I work for Chefs, the travel people."

"You mean you sell tickets for abroad?"

"And advise people where to go, and tell them how to get there."

"By train of course."

"I can tell them all about the moonlight on the Alhambra and the monkeys on the rock of Gibraltar. I can advise against the water in Port Said. I can pick the very best steam packet to take you round the Isles of Greece or follow in the steps of St. Paul's third journey round Asia Minor."

The china-blue eyes were open at their widest. "Oh, Mr. Tooley! I'd no idea you were such a travelled man!"

But Mr. Tooley was only up to page eight in his mind's eye. "I could take you to the Casino at Monte Carlo. We could catch red mullet on the banks of the Blue Bosphoros which runs through the city of Constantinople at a rate of over five hundred thousand gallons a minute. And I could glide you down the canals of Venice in a gondola as the sun sinks behind the Palace of the Doges and eight thousand eight hundred and fifty pigeons fly up into the eaves of St. Mark's."

"It's time I went," said the home bird beside him; but she did not break his spell.

"And I've never set foot out of England." They were two of a feather.

"Then how do you know, Mr. Tooley?"

"It's all in the guide-books, Miss Green."

"Time, Gentlemen, please."

How quiet the streets were. The night air was pleasant after the thick warm atmosphere of the Bodega. In the distance the clock was striking. "Your apple turnover will be done to a turn, Miss Green."

"Oh! It'll be ruined!"

"And you've forgotten your music again." He handed it to her.

"You never forget anything, Mr. Tooley."

"I'm not perfect, Miss Green." He looked at her gravely. "Well, goodnight."

"Goodnight, Mr. Tooley," but there was something left to be said, "Mr. Tooley?"

"Yes, Miss Green?"

"I wouldn't like you to think . . ."

"Oh, I wouldn't, Miss Green."

"You see my circle of friends . . . is not . . . is not . . ."

"Is not extensive, Miss Green?"

"I like people I know, Mr. Tooley, no one sudden and strange."

"Do you know what I like most about you, Miss Green?"

"My G sharp?"

"No, Miss Green. Your quietness. You're so refined."

At the Paragon the noise was terrific.

"I've seen Di'monds in AmsterDAM!"

Above the brass, above the percussion, above the shouts of all who were joining in.

"... AmsterDAM!"

AmsterDAM!"

So "Damn" was all right in England—so far—as long as you said "Amster" first. In the wings Elvira radiated approval, "Clarrie's very good tonight, Fairy, he's doing what he likes with 'em."

Fairy had almost pulled herself together, but not quite. "Monty hasn't come yet," she said, weakly.

Clarrie came steaming into the wings carefully leaving his bottom sticking out past the proscenium arch the better to make sure that he would be called back.

"Allo, Fairy, light an' 'airy! I missed your act tonight. I was on me way from the Tivoli. Where's his lordship? Not deigned to honour us?"

"Clarrie, they're holding the curtain for you."

"All right! All right!" He backed away on to the stage, and Elvira switched her protectiveness to Fairy.

"'Course it's Thursday, isn't it, dear? Hymn singing again. Never mind, Clarrie and me'll drop you off if you promise not to press us to come in."

"You'll come in tomorrow night?" Fairy begged.

"Of course we will, dear, it's Friday, isn't it?"

"Meet me at the Bodega

La, la, la, la, la, la. . . ."

Fairy plonked the vinegar down on the table, then the cheese and pickles. It was later that night. She was back with her Monty, the upset was over, all was well; she had hardly noticed that Monty was in one of his quiet moods. "I'll just get the herrings from the larder. Oh no, there they are on the dumb-waiter. . . . Meet me at the . . . Damn, now I've spilt it. Soused myself all over. Pass me the serviette, Monty. You know Bodega always goes when Maude Mortimer sings it. I wonder if I ought to work it a different way?" There was no reply. "Do you think I ought to change it, Monty?" Silence. "Monty!"

Mr. Tooley blinked. He heard her for the first time.

"Yes, dear?"

"D'you think I ought to change it?"

"Change what?" he asked listlessly.

"The Bodega."

"The Bodega?" Mr. Tooley's voice was sharp.

"Yes, the Bodega. Do you think I ought to drop it from my repertoire?"

"Oh," said Mr. Tooley, relieved. "Oh," he said again, bored.

Fairy did not notice. "Jack Pleasants was working a new number tonight—'Watchin' the trains come in.' Monotonous. I thought it was monotonous. Another herring? Monty—come back from dreamland! Do you want another herring?"

"No thank you, Carrie."

"I don't fancy one either. We'd come home to a hot meal if I had my way, but there, you can't trust that Ada with a piece of toast."

"No, you can't." The flatness left Mr. Tooley's voice. "And she'd never manage an apple turnover."

"I don't care much for them, the pastry lies on my chest."

Hope sprang in Mr. Tooley's heart. "Look, Carrie, I've been thinking, why don't we get someone in to cook a bit of a meal in the evenings. You'd like that, wouldn't you?"

"Monty Tooley, you have got big ideas. Think of the expense."

"You'll be able to ask the Hackeys home and not feel ashamed."

"What's come over you? You never worried about the Hackeys before."

"Course if you don't want to have your friends to the house," Mr. Tooley angled deftly, "I suppose we can go on as we are. I just thought you'd like a change from herrings."

"I would, Monty. If we could find someone we could trust to leave in the house alone. I mean, remember the Robinsons. They got a mother's help in at number seven. She cooked one Sunday lunch and then walked away with his cuff-links while they were sleeping it off. And she burnt the Yorkshire."

This gave Mr. Tooley his chance.

"Oh, we wouldn't take in just anybody, Carrie. I'll make some enquiries at choir practice next Thursday."

"And another thing, ducky. I don't want any young woman walking off with you—or where would I be? I'm gone on you, Monty, an' that's the truth." The large eyes glowed, the large mouth pouted, the large woman enveloped him. "Sometimes," said Fairy, "I think I'm more gone on you than you are on me."

"What a silly thing to think." The life had gone out of Mr. Tooley's voice; but not the light of hope from his heart.

"And now," said Fairy eagerly, "time for bye-byes. Come on up."

"In a minute, Carrie, I've something to clear up in the den."

"Don't stay down too long, Monty. I don't want to be asleep tonight."

"Don't be late not tonight

Don't be late not tonight. . . ."

It was an hour and a half later when Mr. Tooley looked up from his little book. What was time to a poet. No loaf of bread,

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no jug of wine, and only the memory of Thou, but it was enough to inspire him to his best vein.

*I like people I know
No one sudden and strange*

They were Her words and to them Mr. Tooley had added:

*Strangers trouble me so
I like people I know,
Friends I knew as a child
Friends from ages ago.
These are the people that put me at ease
I like people I know.*

He looked at the first "people". He frowned and crossed it out and substituted "folk". It was a much better word.

*I like familiar faces—don't know why
When I'm with strangers I feel so shy.
I like friends who are friends,
People say that I'm slow,
But it's always the same
I like people I know.*

It still did not quite look finished. Ella Wheeler Wilcox would have ended on a note of hope. He saw how he could do the same:

*I'm a stranger no more,
Now I'm someone you know.*

Four

M^{ARCH.} "Is there anything in the paper, Frederick?" Frederick stopped pom-pomming over the kidneys in mid-song. Ellaline felt quite apologetic. She didn't like stopping her good man from taking a pair of sparkling eyes, especially at the beginning of a day when he was in such a good mood. Consols Consolidated. Gilt edges gilt edged.

"Nothing much, my dear. Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence has gone to prison for her principles."

"It seems so unnecessary for a woman to have principles."

"Hush, my dear; you'll be asking if you can go to 'Mrs. Warren's Profession' for your birthday treat next."

"Oh, Frederick, you haven't forgotten!"

"Not this year, my dear. Where shall we go?"

"Could we see the 'Merry Widow' again?"

"A capital idea." His eye ranged down the Theatre page.
"Good God! It's off!"

"The 'Merry Widow' off!" Her large blue eyes filled with tears.

"Let's see what else is on," said Frederick quickly. It was remarkable how sensitive women were. "Our Miss Gibbs', 'The Dollar Princess' and 'The Arcadians'. A poor lot. The trouble with these modern musical comedies is that the fellahs can't write tunes."

"Give me the 'Gondoliers'," said Ellaline.

Frederick obliged.

In Greenwich Park Fred was giving a lick of paint to the Gentleman's sign. On her side Ella was giving LADIES a brisk scrub down. It was March and any time now the weekends would be starting.

"Fred, was there anything in the paper this morning?"

"Not much Ella. Mrs. Pethwick Lawrence is inside again."

"Suffragettes," muttered Ella, "I don't hold with this equality for women. It might put me out of a job."

March; and the morning had become afternoon which had grown into evening. Fairy was standing in the wings of the Queen's, Poplar, effulging from a gentleman's dress-suit; and never can such a suit of dress-clothes have contained such a flowing feminine line, softer angles, and what is more, contained them so inadequately. It was Fairy's answer to dirt. It was with unusual aplomb that she stepped out into the limelight twirling her silver-headed cane to the till-ready. Four bars in and there she was with a backdrop of Piccadilly Circus behind her.

*"I walk down the Strand
With my gloves in my hand"*

she sang; you couldn't have geography as well as everything else. She gave her top hat a swipe with her stick.

*"Nearly everyone knows me
From Smith to Lord Roseb'ry
I'm Burlington Bertie from Bow!"*

She winked at the conductor. For once he winked back. Something must have gotten into Fairy tonight.

*"I stroll," (she strolled);
"With Lord Burlington, roll," (she rolled);
"In the Burlington
Call for champagne, walk out again
Come back and borrow the ink. . . ."*

In the wings Elvira turned to Clarrie in his yachting cap, who was waiting beside her ready to go on and sing "All the little ducks went Quack! Quack! Quack!" That'd have them joining in. It always did. "Something's gotten into Fairy tonight," she said, approvingly. "But if you ask me," the bird-mouth pursed itself, "Ella Shields is going to have something to say if it gets about that Fairy's using her material".

"She's in Bradford," said Clarrie.

"She'll be back," said Elvira.

*"Buckingham Palace I view," sang Fairy happily,
"I stand in the yard while they're changing the guard
Then the King shouts across, Toodle-oo!"*

Only another twenty-four hours and then "Toodle-oo!" thought his Majesty King Edward VII happily. Little Sonia Keppel is at this moment playing her favourite game, slapping pieces of bread and butter (butter side down) on the fat old man's fat old leg, laying penny bets with "Kingy" on which would prove to be the more buttery.

It is the month for Mr. Stanley Howard's Jenkston to win

the Grand National in 10 minutes 44.5 seconds and Oxford the Boat Race, though since the victory fell in Holy Week the celebratory supper was of necessity postponed.

It is the month when Miss Clara Butt, so satisfied with the success of her gramophone records issued last autumn, expressed the desire to make records of four more of her great popular successes, for which she is so universally renowned. No. 03179, "Abide with me"; No. 03178, "Kathleen Mavourneen"; No. 03176, "He shall feed his flock"; No. 03177, "Oh Rest in the Lord".

It is the month when M. Tchaikowsky was acquitted in Moscow of participation in the revolutionary movement; but seventy-nine-year-old Mme Breshkowskaya was implicated up to the hilt and sent to Siberia, where she announced that she gloried in belonging to the Socialist Revolutionary Party; and in St. Petersburg the Emperor, driving to the Anitchkoff Palace, was in collision with an electric train.

It is the month when Austria and Russia optimistically agreed to recognise the status quo in the Balkans.

It is the month when in New York two plays are doing extraordinarily well. "A Bachelor's Baby" at the Criterion and "Is Matrimony a Failure?" at the Belasco.

It is the month, indeed it is the night before Kingy's departure for his beloved Biarritz, for the last time. Wiping the butter from his trousers, he bids goodbye to Mrs. Keppel, who would be meeting him there in four days time. She could hardly cross the Channel in His Majesty's yacht *Alexandra* even though His Majesty was travelling as the Duke of Lancaster. The clock struck seven. "I must get back to Alex," he said looking regretfully around the salon in Portman Square. "She'll be in a bad mood anyway, she's collected herself a terrible list of engagements while I'm away, poor darling."

"Take her to the theatre," soothed Alice Keppel sweetly.

"I can't," said the King; "I've got to sleep on the yacht; besides I'm going to 'Chantecler' at the Port Saint Martin

Theatre tomorrow night. Paris," he said. Was it a flicker of the gaslight or did Kingy wink?

"Rostand," said Mrs. Keppel. "Verse drama," she pointed out meanly.

"Oh dear," said the fat old man, deflated.

*" . . . I'm Bert, Bert, And Royalty's hurt
When they ask me to dine, I say 'No'
I've just had a banana
With Lady Diana,
I'm Burlington Bertie from Bow!"*

Fairy came off to applause and straight into the welcoming arms of Elvira. "You did what you liked with 'em tonight."

"D'you mean it? D'you really mean it?" she shot a quick look round the cluttered wings, reaction had set in. "Monty wasn't here to see me," she said.

Clarrie slapped her on the back. "Good old Fairy—light and airy!"

"Fairy—they're holding the curtain for you."

"No!" said Fairy, unbelieving and thrilled, and reaction had set out.

"Where's his Lordship?" said Clarrie meaningly to Elvira.

"It's Thursday, isn't it?" she looked out at Fairy giving her all.

*" . . . My nose,
Tho' ironical,
Shows, that my monocle
Holds up my face, keeps it in place
Stops it from slipping away. . . ."*

"He's hymn singing again." Elvira shook her head, and the ospreys quivered forebodingly.

*" . . . Hallelu! Hallelu!
Hallelujah!"*

"Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I think we can say we are making progress. But let us remember to count our semibreves. Perhaps a little jingle that Mrs. Perkins composed for her sight-singing class will help us to remember.

*"Gentlemen you must believe,
It pays to count your semibreve."*

The rumble of generous laughter from the basso profundo made up for the obstinate silence in some other parts of the room. Mr. Perkins hurried on. "We meet again next Thursday at seven o'clock. Seven o'clock sharp, please."

"Miss Green . . .," said Mr. Tooley at the door.

"Don't say I've forgotten my music again, Mr. Tooley?"

"Oh no, Miss Green, it's in your hand."

"Oh, so it is."

They laughed together. "Oh, look! Fred Terry in 'The Scarlet Pimpernel'. I'd love to see that." The bus with the poster had stopped right in front of them. "It's only a revival," disparaged Mr. Tooley, who knew that he could never take her to it since he only had his Thursdays. They crossed over. Miss Green looked up at the other side of the bus. "Oh, look," she said, "'Her Path of Sorrow' a drama in four acts by Mrs. F. G. Kimberley at the Royal, Woolwich."

"You wouldn't want to see that," said Mr. Tooley, and as it happened, she didn't. "I hope you will allow me to take you along your way? The evenings haven't started opening to it yet, and if it should come on to rain my umbrella's very capacious."

"Well, it's only March and I'm not a bit afraid."

"Now give me your music-case."

"Oh, Mr. Tooley, I'm beginning to find out you're the masterful sort."

"I'll carry your galoshes too. Come along!"

Her music-case under his arm, her galoshes in his hand, the new, the forceful Mr. Tooley returned to a proposal that he had made earlier in the evening.

"... You tell me yourself you feel tired at the end of the day, Miss Green; but with us you'd be taking a situation with friends. You wouldn't start till after office hours. You'd have all day long to practise your singing, and all your energy to practise with."

"But, Mr. Tooley, a domestic post, it's such a come down after the ribbon department."

The sudden Goliath of Elgin Avenue pressed hard. "Not with us, Miss Green, not with us. You'd be one of the family and in the daytime you'd be a lady of leisure."

In the distraught state in which the Queen of the Ribbon Counter found herself, an earlier woe came to the forefront of that little mind. She clutched the Nattier blue ribbon bow at her throat. "I wish that mauve would come back," she murmured disconsolately. Tears welled up, and Mr. Tooley did his best to comfort her.

"In the evenings we'd be able to practise our two-part harmony for fully an hour before I fetch my wife."

"His wife!" thought Miss Green. "Does your wife give a concert every night?" she asked suspiciously.

"My wife appears every night, Miss Green, but not on the concert platform. She's on the halls."

"The halls!" Miss Green stopped dead in her tracks. There was dismay in her face. Mr. Tooley stopped beside her. "I hate the halls," he said, quietly and very strongly.

"I think you should understand, Mr. Tooley, that I have to live on my wages." It was a different Miss Green speaking in a cold formal voice. "It's quite a pretty life you know. Quite colourful with my ribbons, pink and blue and silver and gold, that's what I live with; and I get ten shillings a week and my midday meals found, and it's meat guaranteed."

"We'll guarantee your evening meals Miss Green and there'll be the additional guarantee of your cooking."

Miss Green looked pleased with her compliment. "Why, here's the Bodega already! How time flies," she giggled. Mr.

Tooley looked stricken. "I'm sorry I can't ask you in tonight. It's my wife, you see. My wife is counting on my fetching her. She's at the Queen's, Poplar, and very early in the bill."

"Oh, Mr. Tooley, I wasn't hinting."

"Of course you weren't. Now what is your answer?"

"Oh, I can't give up my ribbons just like that. I'll have to think it over and ask about it in my prayers."

"And I shall ask in my prayers, Miss Green. It's the best thing there could be. My wife comes home tired. She likes to have her friends around her and entertain. It'd make a world of difference having you there. There'd be a nice hot meal for all of us; and we'd all find our appetites again."

He watched Miss Green dwindle down her road until she was just another shadow in the shades. Then because he was late and because there was one plying he got into a hansom and drove all the way to Poplar as the lamplights lit up for a moment the costumes of late Easter shoppers and then forsook them and selected others. As he proceeded down the Mile End Road, Mr. Tooley, the memory of Miss Green's ribbons weaving round his heart, made a poem from the colours

*"Ribbon blue," he murmured, "Ribbon blue,
I did like your coolness so
Ribbon blue, ribbon blue
You went with her eyes you know."*

"Very rough," he thought "very rough." There would be time for revision in his den later. There would be a lot of revision to be done. This, however, was the moment of inspiration.

*"Ribbon white, ribbon white
You are pure like her that night."*

Was it the jolting of the cab or did a cloud cross his face until he drove the unworthy thought away.

"Ribbon pink," he remembered, "ribbon pink."

He ran his mind through a lot of rhymes. "Link, drink, shrink, stink (perish the thought), prink (he was doubtful), blink, brink, wink. "Think!" he pulled out triumphantly "she was prettiest with you I think." "She was," he said out loud.

*"Ribbon red, ribbon red,
You gave her the rose her sweet cheeks lack
I wish she could wear you all at once
And . . ." he smiled tenderly,
"I wish that mauve would come back."*

The Sea looked mauve next day to Dr. Hawley Harvey Crippen and Miss Ethel le Neve as they set off for darling Dieppe for a dear little holiday.

The sea looked mauve to King Edward VII. Too much port on the royal train the night before, and it was 8.30 and any moment now Prince Louis of Battenberg, the Commander-in-Chief, would be firing his monotonous salute of 21 guns. And the moment the Royal Standard was broken on the mast the forts on the mainland would doubtless join in. Nothing but BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Did they expect him to stand there and count them? He could see no reason for bringing the Atlantic battle fleet back from gunnery practice at Longsands to give him a royal send-off, when all the world knew he was travelling incognito as a private person, a mere Duke, to avoid all that fuss. Prince Louis steamed past followed by the *London*, the Flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir Colin Keppel. Kingy raked his mind to remember which of Alice's in-laws this could be. He couldn't. Well, at least that meant that the fellow had probably got the job without his help. The *Formidable*, the *Venerable*, the *Implacable* and the *Queen* followed and then it began. BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! And YAP! YAP! YAP! from Caesar, who always found the combination of big guns and the sea disturbing. The King resisted the desire to cover his ears with his hands and made for the gangway. He'd be catching his death of cold if he stayed up

here any longer. If only our sailor Prince of Wales had been there he could have entered into the spirit of it.

"Make a signal to *Mohawk* and *Crusader*," he said to the Captain. "They're coming with us."

"Splice the mainbrace!" said the Captain.

"And for God's sake pour me one!" said the King.

He was still cold when they got to Calais at eleven o'clock, but there on the maritime station, smothered in flags and surrounded by troops, the British Consul and the officials of the Northern Railway Company had to be greeted, and the rows of identical military faces had to be inspected.

He was cold when the special train drew into Paris at four o'clock, and there sure enough on the platform were Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador; the Prefect of Police, M. Lepine, and, unaccountably, the President of the British Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Walton.

And though he felt somewhat overheated at the Theatre Port Saint Martin, he was cold again when he opened *The Times* next morning to read what he'd been doing the day before. "Taking advantage of the spring-like weather," he read, and remembering the nip in the spring-like weather he shivered, "His Majesty motored to visit the painter M. Detaille who is engaged on a great picture representing the presentation of the colours to the British Territorial troops. His Majesty was greatly interested in the uniform and other military details."¹

He felt cold when he turned to the Court Circular to see what Alexandra had been up to. Poor darling. "H.M. The Queen drove out accompanied by H.R.H. The Princess Victoria and attended by the Hon. Lady Hardinge. Miss Stockman had the honour of playing upon the pianoforte before Her Majesty. The Queen, accompanied by the Ladies in waiting and the Gentlemen in waiting honoured with her presence the

¹ In fact His Majesty was bored but the politeness of princes included on this occasion attention to Detaille.

concert given by the London Symphony Orchestra at the Queen's Hall this evening."

Two concerts in one day. He broke into a sweat—a cold sweat.

He was cold, coldest of all when he arrived at his beloved Biarritz. There was the Keppel child racing down the station to meet him and he was damned if he was going to play the bread and butter game in public. That child was becoming a menace. In spite of the cold he drove off to see Queen Amelia of Portugal for half an hour, and hurried back to dispose of Princess Frederica of Hanover. That over, Alice and the brat dragged him out along the coast; and when the sun went down it was damn cold in his beloved Biarritz, especially when he'd been counting on a quiet cigar and some advice on investments from Sir Ernest Cassel.

He must have had a temperature when he wrote the gracious message that he had to send to the Mayor of his beloved Biarritz.

"I am glad to be back in this country I love so well," he wrote, "and which each year gives me renewed health."

He sneezed. A fit of coughing shook him.

"Have another dumpling, Miss Green," shouted Fairy from the other end of the table. "You can't refuse your own cooking or we'll all be put off. Have some more of Miss Green's nice tasty hash, Clarrie, pass your plate over Elvira. . . ."

"And that, Gentlemen of the Jury," Rufus Isaacs' voice was low and thrilling, "that was how this scheming girl, this 'other woman', insinuated herself into Mrs. Tooley's heart and home. . . ."

Montague Shearman was getting interested. In spite of his celebrated indifference to and incomprehension of passion, the daring words "other woman" had excited the young barrister strangely. He set aside the list of Theatrical cases to be tried this session. For sometime now he had been thinking that

specialisation in this field might pay dividends. The list seemed to bear him out;

Bernhardt *v.* Popular Playhouse—Alleged breach of contract.

Robey *v.* The Oxford Ltd.—Question of personal Agreement.

Edelston *v.* Marinelli—Libel.

Nordisk Film Company *v.* New Film Hiring Company (a whole new field in the Bioscope business).

De Freece and the Great Western Railway—Disappointing an audience.¹

It was a very impressive list, but a murder was still a murder, and nothing could bring a young barrister more quickly into the public eye and keep him there—if he won.

Rufus Isaacs' voice claimed his full attention.

"... It is not for me to dwell on the animus with which Miss Dinah Green entered the portals of Mrs. Tooley's friendly home in Eglan Avenue. You can imagine, Gentlemen of the Jury, the kindness, the maternal solicitude with which the childless married woman received the young—and seemingly innocent—girl. . . ."

"Try a sip of stout, Dinah. Bring a bit of colour to your cheeks," said the model of maternal solicitude.

"Yes, you do look a bit washed out," said Elvira Hackey, less solicitous.

"And I said to him," said Clarence Hackey loudly, "call yourself a musical director, I said, I wouldn't have you in my German band. Has any one seen it?"

Mr. Tooley failed to laugh. So did Dinah, but the other three made up for them. "There's some greens left, Dinah, finish up," said Fairy; but Dinah meekly pushed the plate away. "No thank you, Mrs. Tooley."

Mr. Tooley looked anxiously at Dinah. He couldn't bear the noise and vulgarity. He was sure that she felt the same. Fairy

¹ "Oh Mr. Porter, what shall I do?"

was nudging Elvira. "Don't suppose she gets much at home. Where is your home dear?"

But before Dinah could reply the room was resounding to a basso-profundo quite unlike the pride of the Kilburn and Brondesbury Choral Society;

*"Is the old home still the same place
Are the same old pictures on the wall?"*

The same old pictures on the wall of the house at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue nearly fell off, such was Clarrie's power to project,

*"Does father still wear the same old trousers
Mother wear the same old shawl?"*

Fairy and Elvira joined in,

*"Have you still got the lodger in the top back room,"
Still without the carpet on the floor . . ."*

they chorused. Mr. Tooley turned to his neighbour, looking so cool, so different from the steaming faces around her.

"I'm sorry about the noise, Miss Green, my wife has a song for every occasion."

"That's all right, Mr. Tooley, I like jollity."

"I thought you liked quiet, Miss Green."

"Oh, I do, Mr. Tooley. But I like company too. Do I put the meat plates in the scullery?"

Mr. Tooley took them from her. "Allow me to give you a hand," he said.

*"Does the old tom cat still spoon upon the mat
With the ginger cat that lives next door?"*

"Give me the old songs every time," said Elvira, "they're always the best."

"I've never worked a sentimental number," said Fairy thoughtfully, "somehow I never had the nerve."

"You could do it, girl," said Clarrie, all reassurance. "You could do it. You're very womanly you know. They don't want to listen to the words in a sentimental song. All they want is a good tune and a handsome woman."

Fairy gave the company one of her winks. It wasn't a Marie Lloyd wink, but it could carry across a dining-room table.

"You can laugh, Fairy, but nobody can say you're not distinguishay. You're like me," Elvira flashed her diamonds, "I was never a pretty girl myself, but I did have an aurora."

"I'll say you did!"

"No, Clarrie, don't be coarse."

But Fairy had come to a decision. "I'll work a number and try it out on Monty. He's my most critical audience, aren't you, dear?" She looked across the table. He wasn't there. "Where's Monty?"

Elvira knew exactly where Monty was. "Giving Miss Green a hand with the dishes."

"Well, why ever! What do we have a skivvy in the morning for? Monty!" she called, "Monty!"

In the kitchen the world, and the wrong end of Elgin Avenue, was well lost.

"Now for the turnover," Dinah was saying. "Is there an oven cloth, Mr. Tooley?"

"Oh, allow me, Miss Green."

Together they peered into the dark cavern.

"Done to a turn," she cried triumphantly, "twenty minutes exactly; how time flies when you're in company."

Mr. Tooley took the hot oven tray from her. "Never mind, Miss Green, you won't have to get up early tomorrow morning."

"That's true," she said, arranging the turnovers tastefully on a rose-pink china dish. "Still, I shall miss my ribbons. Funny, isn't it?"

"Ribbon pink, ribbon pink," Mr. Tooley murmured into the

kitchen haze above her fair head. "How pretty she looked in you I think!" He'd been working on it. Dinah squealed delightedly.

"Oh, Mr. Tooley, you're a poet and don't know it."

Modestly Mr. Tooley refrained from protest.

"Monty! Monty!" Fairy's voice, with its edge of exasperation, broke the idyll.

"Coming," said Mr. Tooley over the linoleum-topped kitchen table, over the rose-pink plate, over the shelf for the tea-caddy. "Coming, Carrie," he assured her, blissfully happy and in hell.

"I'll just put the turnovers on the table, Mr. Tooley, and then I really must go."

"No," said Mr. Tooley sharply. "No," he said gently. "It would be better for you to wait until our guests have gone and then I can see you home."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Tooley, I hate the dark."

By now Fairy's voice had twice the edge.

"Monty!"

But Monty was slipping into his chair and the turnovers were at her elbow. She vented her unreasonable displeasure on the dish. "It's hot," she said.

"They were good," she was saying, ten minutes later. "Look, Dinah, we've eaten up every one. That's a recommendation for any cook."

"It'll be a lucky fellow gets you in his kitchen for keeps, Miss Green. Eh, Tooley?"

"Yes, a very lucky man, Clarence."

"Time we were going, Clarrie, can we drop you off, Miss Green? Where do you live?"

"Brondesbury Villas, but . . ."

"I know, it's a turning off the High Road. It's right on our way; we'll take you."

"But . . ." said Mr. Tooley.

Elvira pounced. "But what, Monty?"

"But, but . . . but it's so kind of you, Elvira," said Mr. Tooley, defeated.

"Kind, nonsense," said Clarrie, spotting a cue for song, 'come on, Miss Green, and put on your ta-ta little girlie!"

"That's Clarrie Mayne's material, Clarrie."

"And can't she work it!" But Clarrie's admiration for Miss Mayne didn't stop him having a go there and then.

"Put on your ta-ta little girlie," he burlesqued. "Do. do. what I want you to. . . ."

Putting his arms round Dinah's waist, he danced her out into the hall. Dinah giggled pinkly. Mr. Tooley turned away.

Later that night when they were upstairs, Fairy returned to the subject of millinery.

*"So put on your ta-ta
Your pretty little ta-ta. . . .*

Monty," she said, she was taking off her rings, "Did you notice Elvira's ta-ta tonight? Well, you couldn't help noticing it, but did you like it?" Receiving no reply, her mind turned to another tack. "I will say this for Dinah. She's a quiet little thing, but she can cook."

"Quiet, yes, she is quiet."

"Monty, what's come over you? Ten minutes ago you were the life and soul of the party—for you."

"I suppose I'm a bit tired."

"Your tum-tum's too full, that's what's wrong with you."

"Yes dear, I expect that's it."

"Monty, I've got some bad news."

Mr. Tooley looked concerned. "What is it, Carrie?"

"You know how well 'Burlington Bertie's' been going?"

Mr. Tooley lost interest, "Oh, yes."

"Ella Shields won't let me use it any more. She says I mustn't sing it any more."

"Well, that's not very friendly."

"Oh, I don't know, dear. After all, it is her material." She

unpinned her locket watch and laid it carefully in the pin-tray. "Material!" she sighed. "I'd give the world to get my teeth into a song! I'd give the world to get my tongue around a tune. A happy tune that has a swing that catches on." The generous features looked wistful. "Unbutton me back buttons, Monty," she said. Mr. Tooley, who had his shirt half over his head, pulled it down again and turned to the familiar tussle with twenty-four minute pearl buttons and twenty-four Lilliputian button-holes. They made his fingers feel like rolling pins. And what was more, Carrie wouldn't keep still.

"One song," she said, "one song, that'd see me through. Play two houses and then goodnight! One song!" Mr. Tooley flinched. He'd only managed one button so far. "One song that is mine! I tell you, Monty, I'd give the world to get my teeth into a song. And when I get that bloody song I'm hanging on!"

"Carrie!" said Monty shocked. It quite offset the bit of luck he'd had when six buttons came undone all at one time. Earrings and bracelets clattered on to the dressing-table. "What I'd give to know how success feels. Deevy hats and a dozen dresses." By now she was out of hers and studying the bust controlled by the Liberty bodice in the looking-glass. "Every Johnny'd know just who I was." She sat down at the dressing-table. "What I'd give to start off a fad like Fairy Face cream or Felcher stays. You know these new corsets are good for my figure," she said. She patted a hip. The London Corset Co. could do with a more attractive trade-name than The Corset Lavable, but it was a good buy at 35s. including suspenders. "Look what it says in the catalogue," she rummaged. "'There is not a figure we cannot fit and improve. This is simply an ideal corset for Evening and Colonial Wear', just right for my tour of Australia—if I ever do it, 'the texture is Broderie Anglaise, so cut that all the appearance of a small waist is achieved without any pressure whatsoever; and, above all, it is specially constructed for the laundry.' Don't talk to me about the Gibson Girl," she said, "what about the Felcher figure? One

song, that would make my name. Make my fortune too." She saw herself spending it. The vision faded rapidly, "I ask you, Monty, who's going to write it? Sit down there and get on and write it. You used to say you'd write me a song, Monty; but that was a long time ago, you don't have time now, do you?"

"No," said Mr. Tooley firmly.

Fairy kicked off her petticoat. "Who's the mug who'll write a song for me?" She stood up in her Lavable Corset and her lacy Bloomers. She started moving about the room hanging up her clothes and singing.

"Joshua! Joshua!

You're Clarrie Mayne's song, Gosh you are! . . .

I tell you, Monty, I'd give the world to get my teeth into that song." But Monty was struggling with a shoe lace.

"When a girl goes to be wed

She is nearly off her head

And upon my word she don't know what to do."

She bore down on him:

"She is frightened for, oh lor!

She's never done such things before

Twiggy voo my boys?

Twiggy voo?"

But Mr. Tooley had twigged. In fact he'd hopped it into the bathroom. Blast! "I'd give the world to get my teeth into that song," she shouted through the door. The mood for song was on her.

"As I walk along the Bois Boo-Long . . ."

she paced the white sheepskin rug,

"With an independent air

You can hear the girls declare

He must be a millionaire. . . .

I'd give the world for Charlie Coborn's share of that!" she said more quietly to the picture of Auntie Mabel, who had left her her little bit of jewellery, and now hung approvingly before her bed.

She sank down on the eiderdown. "But I ask you, Aunt Mabel, who's going to write it? No one wants to write a song for me. No one. Not Orlando Powell. I tried him. Not George Ware. He's dead. Not J. P. Harrington. Not Mills and Bennett Scott. Certainly not George Le Brun!"

"Certainly not, Mr. Le Brun," said the barmaid of the Cricketers Arms in Battersea. "You've had quite enough already and that's not the way to find your missing music!"

"A little of what you fanshy does you good," muttered George Le Brun.

"Not by the looks of you," said the barmaid.

George Le Brun reproved her with a swaying index finger, "Itsh the title," he said.

"Marie Lloyd won't laugh," said the barmaid.

"Like to bet?" said George Le Brun. He felt better. Almost able to concentrate. Where could he have left the song he had written for Marie? Not across the river at The King's Head and Eight Bells. No piano there. Not at the Six Bells. Not at the Queen's Head up the King's Road. Not at the Queen's Elm in the Fulham Road. He couldn't remember any farther back than that.

Through the only way into the saloon bar of The Cricketers Arms strode Martin Harvey to the life—his name was C. Easthope Warrender, the first actor to play a Labour Exchange. He was puffing a little; he'd been hurrying across the bridge so as not to keep his friend Weldon Atherstone waiting. But good old Weldon, usually so punctual, was nowhere to be seen. There was George Le Brun in his usual ripe condition; Witty Watty Walton who had just gone bankrupt in Liverpool (Liabilities £163, 11s. 3d., assets £62, 15s.); and James For-

tescue who was suing Melodrama Productions for his wrongful dismissal from the Sexton Blake company and the alienation of Pedro his bloodhound ("I love that dog like my own mother"); and sipping three hock and seltzers in the corner Wilson, Keppel (no relation) and Betty.

C. Easthope settled himself at a little table. Frankly he was puzzled. He'd sent Weldon Atherston a picture postcard depicting himself in "King Henry the Eighth" at Her Majesty's with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Mr. Arthur Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanbrugh (C. Easthope Warrender was playing the herald and you could just see his tabard in the middle distance). And on the back of the card he had clearly stated the time at which he expected Weldon Atherstone to appear. Opening time. He had also dropped a pretty broad hint that he was on to a good thing and Weldon Atherstone was not the man to miss a good thing. Besides, he knew for a fact that Weldon had failed to get into Mr. Robert Courtneidge's "The Arcadians" touring company; Mr. Ernest Benham's "Old Heidelberg" touring company; Mr. Haldane Crichton's "The Cingalee" touring company; Miss A. E. F. Horniman's "Candida" and "Cupid and Commonsense" touring company; a small cast this, so not surprising; Mr. C. Watson-Hill's "For Love and the King" touring company; and one step down in the social scale Mr. C. Watson-Mill's "For Love of the Princess" touring company; Mr. Lionel Rignold's "What the Butler saw" touring company; perhaps just as well; Miss Florence Glossop-Harris and Mr. Frank Cellier's touring repertory company; a lot of parts to learn here, maybe poor old Weldon was losing his memory; "The Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" touring company and even the Melodramatic Productions Syndicate's "Sexton Blake" touring company.

He looked across at James Fortescue. He was lachrymose. Perhaps he was still missing Pedro the bloodhound. He looked away again before he caught his eye and had to buy him a drink.

Time passed and George Le Brun fell off the piano stool, and after that it became pretty clear that Weldon Atherstone was putting in no appearance tonight. C. Easthope Warrender felt in his black velveteen breast pocket and pulled out another postcard. He rejected himself in "The Light that Failed" with Margaret Halston, Gertrude Elliot and C. Aubrey Smith, he couldn't really make himself out; and "If I were King" with George Alexander and Margaret Myles wouldn't really do, it was all right for George Alexander, he was playing François Villon, but C. Easthope was only a warrior and not even his landlady was quite sure which; he plumped for "The Gay Gordons" with Seymour Hicks. There he was doing a Highland Fling—with one or two others. Having inked a thick blue X above his head, he turned the card over and prepared to spread the good news. He had been back three times to the Labour Exchange in Epping Forest. Long enough to learn that the money was fixed and regular and that he had no lines to learn, no costumes to find and in fact no evening performances to wear them in. "Take my advice, laddie," he wrote, "sign on with me in the happiest company in which it has ever been my pleasure to serve. No jealousy over parts, no parts; no having to be nice to the actor-manager's wife—no actor-manager." No more room on the card either; he pulled out another of himself in "Bluebell in Fairyland", he was the gnome on the right but that was fifteen years ago, "no argument about terms and the ghost walks every Thursday".

"Do you want a stamp?" said Witty Watty. C. Easthope nodded, "Yes, please."

"Well, if you wanta stamp, what's stoppin' ya?" said Witty Watty. He roared his witty head off.

The barmaid was looking apprehensively at George Le Brun and wondering if she should have him ejected, when out of the night came a distraught woman.

"Dead," she said, "he's dead. Brandy," she enunciated clearly. Her name was Elizabeth Earle and in *The Times* next

day she was "described as a teacher of dramatic art at Lady Benson's academy in Gower Street", "Brandy!" she repeated; but the barmaid had been had before.

"Who's dead?" she said.

"Weldon Atherstone," said the teacher of dramatic art, "my lover," she gulped. "Gone and I never called him husband."

"Gone and I never got him signed on," said C. Easthope.

"Gone are the days •

When my heart was young and gay,"

mumbled George Le Brun.

"Gone?" said Fred Moule, who had just dropped in from the Battersea Empire, "Weldon gone? We were together in 'The Grip of the Law' not three weeks ago."

Miss Earle raised her arms above her head and grasped the saloon curtain, it was on wooden rings and they rattled. "Weldon," she intoned, "is beyond the law. We had," she sobbed, how to put it delicately? "intimate relations."

"You can have a few of mine," said Witty Watty. He was convulsed.

"He visited me whenever he liked."

"He was an intellectual man," mourned Fred Moule, "and during the fifteen years I knew him, he saw many ups and downs." He said it again at the inquest.

C. Easthope Warrender looked down at the picture post-cards. It was a pity to waste all that good advice. Who could he send them to? He scratched out Weldon Atherstone's name and he looked thoughtful. Thirty bob a week was thirty bob a week, and he knew someone who was keen on money—"Harry Lauder" he wrote on both cards.

"Oh stop yer tickling Jock

Won't you stop yer tickling Jock . . ."

hummed Fairy seductively.

*"Dinna mak me laugh sae hearty
Or ye'll mek me chok'."*

But even this didn't put a certain idea into Monty Tooley's head; maybe it was her accent.

"Oh, Blast!" said Fairy. "No one wants to write a song for me. What I'd give to hear 'em applauding. Really applauding. See my name at the top of the poster. Even he'd sit up and take notice then." She looked down at him lying there. "Oh well," she thought, "tomorrow night is another night." Mr. Tooley was still, but he was not asleep. His leaping imagination was with Miss Green. "Ah well," he thought, "tomorrow night is another night."

Five

"I've been thinking, Carrie," said Mr. Tooley, three days later. And so in all truth he had. "I've been thinking. We could ask the Robinsons round over the weekend if you like."

"The Robinsons!"

"They live quite near." His voice had a defensive note. Fairy smiled indulgently. "Course they do, silly. They live next door, don't they?"

"Gentlemen of the Jury, you will not fail to notice the significance of the proximity of the Family Robinson, the second couple who were asked to hot supper at the Tooleys. They lived next door. They were . . ." Rufus Isaacs felt for the word, "neighbours. Brondesbury Villas was not on the way home for the Robinsons."

But Montague Shearman, a lightning mind, had already grasped this line of argument about the accused's past and had

dashed away to his own future. Rayner Goddard tapped him on the arm. "You may be on to a good thing with these theatre cases," he said; "look, there've been five that I can recollect in the last month." He handed over a grubby piece of paper.

L.C.C. *v.* The Bermondsey Bioscope Co. (A question of Sunday closing.)

Feningstein *v.* the Paragon Bioscope.

The Pavilion Newcastle *v.* Ginnett and Bostock and another. (The case of Consul, The Performing Chimpanzee.)

Ada Reeve *v.* Saroni's Picture Palace. (A chance to meet Miss Reeve what's more.)

Monckton *v.* the Gramophone Co. A question of the right to reproduce mechanically "Moonstruck", Mrs. Monckton's great success. (And for ever after losing the case Mr. Monckton felt such a silly when the moon came out.)

At the Old Bailey Rufus Isaacs was still droning on. "... No, Brondesbury Villas was not on the way home for the Robinsons." Young Mr. Shearman congratulated himself. He'd missed nothing. "When they had departed the indispensable Miss Green had only 'to put on her ta-ta' like the 'little girlie' in the popular song and wait for Mr. Tooley, her self-appointed escort, to see her home. . . ."

"The Robinsons did appreciate your lemon curd, Miss Green, they wolfed the lot."

"I thought I'd try a fricassee of rabbit next, Mr. Tooley."

It was the infamous walk home. It seemed very natural at the time.

"Does Mrs. Tooley like rabbit?"

"We shall have to wait until Friday night to find out, Miss Green. Tomorrow is Thursday."

Miss Green, it seemed, had forgotten choir practice. She giggled guiltily,

*"Chorister you must be braver
With your demi-semi quaver."*

They laughed together. "Well then, Mr. Tooley, it'll be fricassee on Friday."

"Yes, only . . ."

"Only what, Mr. Tooley?"

"Only it's the Hackeys on Friday. They'll be seeing you home."

"So they will—oh well," she dismissed Friday. They took a few paces on their way.

"Have a little piece of my wife's cake," sang a late reveller wending his wobbly way across the road. Mr. Tooley shuddered.

"It makes such a difference having you at home in the evenings, Miss Green."

"Cold supper, cold welcome as the Welsh say."

"Warm hands, warm heart" said Mr. Tooley a trifle mixed.

But Miss Green's mind was on the skies. The luminous mauve glow that lightened the hem of the diamond-studded, dark-blue velvet sky that hung over London. "I wish I could see the comet," said Miss Green.

"Is there anything in the paper this morning, Frederick?"

Frederick discarded M. le Blon's death near San Sebastian thanks to the failure of his Blériot monoplane at a height of 50 feet. He discarded the accident to the balloon Pommern which struck a factory roof in ascent from Stettin and fell into the Baltic Sea near Sassnitz, drowning Dr. Selbruck, a member of the Reichstag for Stettin. He skipped the cancellation of Theodore Roosevelt's audience with the Pope. The Pope had insisted that the ex-President should not visit American Methodists carrying out a campaign against the Holy See. Ellaline's mother was a Methodist. Ah! What was this . . . ?

This was the Conference for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic which was being held in Paris. The Conference appeared to have been a great success and the delegates,

unanimous on all points, were now moving on to consider obscene publications. . . .

"Frederick," said Ellaline. "Frederick," she repeated.

He started guiltily and turned the page. No subject for Ellaline.

"Halley's Comet." He read out firmly. "We learn that some of our readers are experiencing difficulty in finding the comet, both with the naked eye and with binoculars. This difficulty was anticipated by astronomers who never expected that it would be easy to see as a morning star. It may be better placed as an evening star, its elongation from the sun being much greater. In placing it, Venus is not much use, rising forty minutes later. Pegasi is a better guide."

Ellaline gazed starily at him across the breakfast table. How wise her Frederick was.

At the Observatory at Stonyhurst College, near Blackburn, a row of shining morning faces were turned towards a black-garbed monk. How wise Father A. L. Cortie was. "The Comet is approaching us at four million miles per day," he was saying, "the length of the tail will increase, but it is doubtful if the tail will be sufficiently long to reach the earth on May the nineteenth at the time of transit over the sun. A length of fifteen million miles would be necessary for this. As it tends to diminish in the course of time possibly it may never reach us." The class sighed. "I saw it this morning," he continued airily, between 3.30 and 4 a.m. both in the 4-inch and 15-inch equatorial telescope. The nucleus was not sharply stellar, but disc-like and surrounded by an envelope of an ellipsoidal or egg-shaped form." However it was not for this pearly flow of information that the class admired him, but for the one solid nugget that he threw out as an afterthought. "If you look along the telescope the comet is just visible to the naked eye."

Though telescopes were in short supply, the Fifth Form at Stonyhurst had naked eyes to a man.

"I shall write to *The Times* about it," said Father Cortie happily. He did.

Was it a coincidence that the *Daily Mirror* was attempting to up its readership that week with its series "Can Monks Lie?"

"Can Monks Lie?" read Ella, peering through the steel-rimmed spectacles perched on the end of her nose at the *Daily Mirror* left behind in the LADIES. Fred had got hold of a *Times* left behind in the GENTLEMEN. "Ella," he called across the hedge, "here's something for you."

"Can't come," said Ella, "I'm busy reading," she added. So might Hercules have stuck to his task.

"He's on his way back," said Fred, who knew Ella's weakness for the doings of the Royal family. "His Nobs is on his way back."

Ella laid aside her monks and made for her monarch.

"Biarritz: Monday. His Majesty exchanged visits with the Grand Duke Alexander and the Grand Duchess Xenia. In the evening His Majesty gave a farewell dinner which was attended by the Duchess Grazioli, Sir Everard Hanibro, Count and Countess du Bourg de Bozas, Lord de Ramsay and his youngest daughter, the Hon. Sybil Fellowes, Countess Adam Tarnowska, Viscountess Ingestre. His Majesty sent eighty pounds to be distributed among the poor of Biarritz."

"Foreign poor," grumbled Fred.

"Oh well," said Ella, who had had rather a good day. "They expect it of him."

Biarritz. His beloved Biarritz. And here he was in the Royal carriage on the 10.30 to Bordeaux waving goodbye to it for the last time. Though mercifully he could not know this. He waved to Alice Keppel, he waved to Ernest Cassel, he waved to baby Keppel and flicked the breakfast butter off his trousers. As the train pulled out he told Ponsonby, Ward and Sir James Reid, Bart., that he wanted to close his eyes. Then he settled back in his carriage with Caesar on his lap, and let his mind dwell on pleasures to come.

Alexandra, poor darling, had written from Corfu to say that she was spending a few more days with George; that would give him a little play-time still. Also she had ordered him a new car from the Daimler Company. It had a 57-h.p. engine and it would be his twelfth Daimler. Ernest had a Rolls. He thought of poor Gustave over in Sweden and the miles and miles he'd have to walk behind the illustriously literate coffin of Björnsterne Bjornson. "Sweden's Victor Hugo," *The Times* obituary called him. How did that recitation baby Keppel gave with such dramatic emphasis on the drawing-room hearth rug in Portman Square go?

*Said Briar Roses' mother
To the naughty Briar Rose
What will become of you my child
The Lord Almighty knows.*

He smiled indulgently. Thank God Kipling was fit. How did that encore that baby Keppel invariably obliged with go. "If."

Bordeaux 1.39. Calais 2.15. Wednesday, London at 6.19, arriving at Victoria by the South East, Dover and Chatham Railway Company.

On the platform the Reception Committee had been waiting some time. Our sailor Prince of Wales was ostensibly improving the golden hour by boning up on Naval strategy with Captain Bryan Godfrey-Faussett, R.N., who was attending him, but underneath he was wondering not for the first time if dear Papa would die first, and whether the waiting would be worth while. Prince Arthur of Connaught, his soldier uncle, was feeling a little out in the cold. Mr. Asquith was prudently stopping Mr. Churchill from placing a bet on the King's horse Witch of the Air, which wasn't due to run for a fortnight, "Wait and see," he said. The Master of the Horse, the Earl of Granard, was pacing the platform like a restive trotting pony; the Lord Steward, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord in Waiting,

the Groom in Waiting and the Master of the Household were clustered round the Keeper of the Privy Purse, who was playing with what they took to be a chocolate slot machine. He banged it, but a card shot out. "Do not hazard your resources," it said. It was signed Esmerelda, star gazer of the Orient.

Outside the band was playing "Pomp and Circumstance" to keep the people quiet or to drown the noise they were making.

"Land of Hope and Glory," they chanted with the trombones as the train pulled in. It was the hymn that Elgar had run up for King Edward's coronation, but as His Majesty stepped down to the platform for the last time he was unaware of the dreadful symmetry.

He drove to Buckingham Palace and it seemed no time at all before he drove out again to Covent Garden. He was feeling very tired. So was Tetrzzini. She had failed to appear the night before and she was not really fit for Gilda now. *The Times* remarked on it the next day. "Many of her notes in the higher register were hard," wrote the critic, "and not all were in tune," he added meanly.¹

The next day the king received Kitchener and gave him his Field Marshal's baton; he took luncheon with the family—his family. The Princess Royal and the Duke of Fife, the Princesses Alexandra and Maud and Prince Arthur of Connaught. And they all trailed after him to the Royal Academy, and so did those growing grandsons Edward and Albert. He had a quick look at the pictures and privately thanked his Maker that he'd be in Sandringham that weekend not having to listen to the speeches at the banquet. He'd never liked stag parties. In the evening he went to "Alias Jimmy Valentine" at the Comedy, and spent a part of the interval wondering which theatrical they would want him to knight in the Birthday Honours List. Given his head, he would have plumped for George Edwardes. Last year he'd dubbed old Herbert Tree and the playwright Pinero.

¹ Two nights later there was Mme Tetrzzini singing Traviata. She was still not right and John McCormack was "also feeling the effects of the weather".

Fascinating character Mrs. Tanqueray, not as notorious as Mrs. Ebbsmith though. . . .

Next day he felt tired—tired and chesty. They drove him to Sandringham in the new Daimler with Caesar on his lap. He left George to endure the food at the Royal Academy . . . and the speeches . . . poor old George.

The President, Sir Edward Poynter, Bart., proposed the King (cheers) and the Prince of Wales replied (cheers). The President then proposed the Armed Forces (cheers) and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward Seymour replied for the Navy (cheers), touching on the efficiency of that service (more cheers), and Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood replied for the Army (cheers), concentrating on its traditions (renewed cheers). To the President's toast to His Majesty's Ministers (cheers) Lord Morley replied (cheers). He suggested that there were no signs of decadence in the nation (virile cheers). Finally the President proposed the guests (cheers) and in his reply Sir George Reid touched on the subject of loyalty to the Crown (prolonged cheers). . . .

In the bar of the Cricketers Arms at Battersea George Le Brun turned to Witty Watty Walton. "Cheers!" he said.

At St. James Hall in Great Portland Street another George, George Bernard Shaw, was turning to a whole audience who had come to hear him address the National Committee to Promote the break up of the Poor Law. The main object of the English people was to avoid thinking, he was telling them. (Laughter.) This country was really at present in a deplorable and appalling condition. He apologised to the universe for living in it. (Loud laughter.) All through his public life he had done what he could to try to make people uncomfortable about it. (More laughter.) He appealed for contributions on a liberal scale because it cost a great deal of money to knock an idea into the heads of the people. (Laughter and cheers.) God, he must be on form!

"God! Rufus Isaacs is on form!" Thought young Montague Shearman as he listened to the rolling periods.

"... Fairy Felcher was an honest artiste. She gave her all to her performance. She was glad enough on her return from her music hall to take her hot supper in bed—if there was no company. And why should she not, Gentlemen of the Jury? She was a hard worker, a wage earner. Her brain was taxed, her bones were tired, but her heart, Gentlemen, her heart was warm. Imagine then with what ease Miss Green, taking advantage of the childless woman's trusting nature, worked her subtle arts and made herself indispensable to her benefactress. . . ."

"It's your casserole, Mrs. Tooley. Can I bring the tray in?"

The tired face beamed up from the bed-clothes.

"Put it down on the bedside what-not." She indicated the bamboo table. "How kind of you to bring it up to me, Dinah dear."

"Oh, it's nothing, Mrs. Tooley. You look so tired."

Fairy wondered whether her rose-pink negligee was doing as much for her as she had hoped it would when she had seen it in the window of the Bon Marché near the Kilburn Empire. "Tired," she said, "and can you wonder after that house tonight. They'd sing along with Victoria Monks, but I couldn't get a squeak out of 'em."

"You look ever so lovely now you've got into your pretty negligee." So it was doing its work, but only up to a point. "I wish that mauve would come back," said Dinah.

"Wishy-washy." Fairy dismissed the year before last's colour. "You're a good girl, Dinah," she said. "What's the time, dear?"

"Well it must be. . . ."

"Hand me my watch—it's on the dressing-table by the hair tidy."

Dinah pounced. "Oh, isn't it deevy?" she said, admiring the

sapphire blue enamel as she held it up to the light. "I love the little silver wreath. It's quite a possession."

"You press the spring dear and listen to the pretty tune. It was made in Germany."

Dinah pressed the spring and listened to "Ach du lieber Augustin". "Oh, it is a possession. I don't suppose I shall ever possess anything as nice as that."

"Have it, love," said big-hearted Fairy. "You take it."

"Oh, I couldn't, Mrs. Tooley."

But by this time the exhausted Mrs. Tooley had come to life again, all Fairy-godmother.

"Go on, you keep it. I got it from my poor sister Rosie after she died and it gives me the creeps and that's the truth of it. Come here, dear, and let me pin it on you." Fairy sat up. "Call, that a chest? Why it's flat as a pancake."

Dinah flushed. "Oh, thank you, Mrs. Tooley."

"Go on, go and look at it in the mirror. That's right, puff yourself out."

"Oh, Mr. Tooley won't believe his eyes when he sees how generous you've been."

"Go and show him, dear."

Miss Green took to her light little toes like a leaf in the wind. "Mr. Tooley! Mr. Tooley!" sang out her soprano, as she skimmed downstairs. "Look what Mrs. Tooley's given me. It's a possession! It's a possession!"

At the Met in the Edgware Road, Clarence Hackey was trying out his new plantation number "Go to sleep my little pica-ninny". He hadn't got it quite as he wanted it yet. It had to be even quieter, even more touching. Something a bit out of the ordinary for Clarrie.

In the bar at the back of the stalls at the Met in the Edgware Road they couldn't hear a word. They could just see his lips moving through the beautifully patterned Victorian glass that separated them from the stalls.

Mr. Paul Martinetti wasn't trying to listen anyway; he had to listen to his wife. "It's not natural," she was saying, "and it's not decent; and it's not in good taste." She put back her stout. Mrs. Martinetti was a friend of Mrs. Crippen's and considering the death notice had appeared in the *Era* only last week she had been very upset to see Miss Ethel le Neve in Belle Ellmore's furs and bits of jewellery. "It's a lot too soon," she said, "to go flaunting about in a dead woman's remains."

"Not remains dear," said Mr. Martinetti, "valuables."

Over by the bar a man who looked like Martin Harvey was brushing the beer off his trousers.

"It's on you," said his witty companion.

It was Thursday and earlier that day C. Easthope Warrender had taken Witty Watty Walton to the Labour Exchange for the first time. What was more they had found out that you didn't have to go all the way to Epping Forest. You could collect in Westminster. Admittedly they had a nasty habit there of making actors queue up in the women's section; but at least they came under the heading "Women: first class". They had been standing each other several rounds on the strength of it ever since.

C. Easthope Warrender carried his pint over to the piano. It had the only spare stool in the room, but on it was a very stained piece of manuscript paper. He peered at the little black dots. He pointed to the signature, "George Le Brun", scribbled under the title.

Witty Watty pointed too. "By George!" he said; he convulsed himself. He hiccuped.

In Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Mr. James J. Thornton hiccuped. The call boy was slapping him on the back. "Mr. Thornton," he said, "Mr. Behrbaum wants you. I told him you were on stage." It was the usual form at the Behrbaum house in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Mr. Behrbaum hated a drinking man. If you worked his theatre you had to know the system. You

stepped through the scene door at the side of the stage and made for the saloon across the alley. The doorman was tipped off and if Mr. Behrbaum wanted you he was told you were on stage. Then the call boy came and got you.

After his fifth double James J. Thornton was in no mood for this sort of pantomime. What's more, he didn't like his billing or his spot on the bill. He'd played better places than Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He straightened his black Prince Albert and strode, not on to the stage in accordance with his alibi, but straight for Mr. Behrbaum—or as straight as he could.

"I'm quitting," he said.

"You can't walk out," said Mr. Behrbaum.

James J. Thornton fixed him with one of his extra-special alcoholic stares. "Christ walked out of Bethlehem," he said. "So can James J. Thornton. Hic!"

"Hic!" said C. Easthope Warrender, "so I shaid to her! Hic! Madam I shaid, I will not play the Parkhurst Hall, even in Jumbo in Rhumboland!"

"Even in Rhumbo in Jumboland," said Witty Watty. They looked at each other owlishly. Their eyes failed to focus, but they got up. They swayed towards the door. The little man who was coming through it avoided them. He picked his way across to his ample and overdecorated wife who was sitting at the bar with Clarence Hackey and his petite but equally overdecorated wife.

"Come along, Carrie," he whispered. "You know we've got the Robinsons to supper."

"Them again," said Fairy.

"Well, I like Mr. Robinson."

"I don't like Mrs. Robinson."

"Pass the greens to Mrs. Robinson, Dinah."

"How do you keep your greens so green, Mrs. Tooley?"

"Oh, you'll have to ask Dinah that. I've got no talent for

domesticity, have I, Monty?" said Fairy in a voice that implied an artist had other gifts. Mrs. Robinson could have choked her with her own green greens. "Besides, I haven't the time to spend in the home," she added, which only made it worse.

"Well, Mrs. Fairy, you keep the place nice and cheerful I must say," said Mr. Robinson looking round appreciatively at the blue plate with the Gibson girl that hung opposite the chiffonier; the signed picture of Little Tich on the chimney-piece, shoes and all; the tasteful arrangements of paper Japanese fans chasing each other round the looking-glass and the papier-mâché letter stand decorated with Ellaline Terriss and bulging with picture postcards that stood upon the bureau. Mr. Robinson leant back perilously on his chair. "There's always a bit of life going on here," he said expansively. He breathed in. "I can set my watch by the time you and your guests come back."

"And when they leave. Really, these walls are so thin," said Mrs. Robinson with enough edge to cut clean through them.

Fairy chose not to hear. Mr. Robinson was her audience. "'Course it's fun on the halls, but it takes it out of you, you know. There's times I just want to come home and put my feet up, aren't there, Monty?"

"I expect we all feel like that sometimes. Many a day I'm worn out after the shopping," said Mrs. Robinson. Let her not think that it was only on the halls that you could get tired. Once again Fairy chose not to hear.

"There's many a time I'd like to escape to a little cottage in the country. Just me and Monty. An artist can't keep on giving herself without its telling on her. And it's not just the performances. You've got to keep changing your repertoire too."

"Beattie Batchelor's still singing the same songs."

"Beattie Batchelor's Beattie Batchelor." This was undeniable. "She's what Monty calls a law unto herself, isn't she, dear?"

"I like Gertie Gitana," said Mrs. Robinson, but Fairy swept on.

RAPPEL 1910

"Then there's this new ragtime coming in. Everybody's doing it."

*"Doing it!
Doing it! . . ."*

sang Mr. Robinson who was a born joiner-in.

"There you are," said Fairy, "it's catching."

Mrs. Robinson hadn't caught it. "I wouldn't bother my head with ragtime; it won't last."

But Fairy and Mr. Robinson were already down from the table and clicking their fingers all over the carpet.

*"Everybody's doing it
Doing what?
Turkey Trot. . . !"*

Mr. Tooley looked at Dinah. He hoped that That One could hardly believe her eyes. He feared that it was fascination he saw in them.

*"See that ragtime couple over there,
Watch them throw their shoulders in the air,
Snap their fingers, Honey I declare. . . ."*

They pranced.

*"It's a bear!
It's a bear!
It's a bear!
There!"*

They subsided together on to the sofa and Mr. Robinson squeezed Fairy's waist. "What a voice," she said, when she got her breath back, "you ought to be on the 'alls yourself."

There was a silly smile on Mr. Robinson's face and Mrs. Robinson had had all that she could stand. "Fred, Fred, I think we should be going home; Mr. Tooley's looking very tired."

Fairy looked across to the table where her Monty still sat,

bolt upright and plainly hating it, next to the wide-eyed Miss Green. Poor little mouse. "It's funny," she said, "it seems to take more out of Monty than it does out of me, for all that I'm the artist of the family."

In Greenwich Park Fred and Ella were locking up the LADIES and GENTS below the Observatory. Lock up was later than usual tonight, but the head park-keeper had reckoned that what with Halley's comet and what with this being an observatory there'd be plenty of people who wanted to observe. However, even the longest day comes to an end and Fred was lifting his quavering voice in his favourite song, as he closed the door of the Gents behind him.

*"We've been together now for 40 years
And it don't seem a day too much . . ."*

Not even Albert Chevalier gave it more,

"There ain't a lady livin' in the land . . ."

He fumbled with the latch of the gate,

"As I'd change for me dear old dutch . . ."

"Clang," went the gate.

"Fred," called Ella, from the Ladies end.

"Yes, Ella?"

"It's forty-one," she said and closed the door behind her.

"It's forty."

"It's forty-one."

So they went their separate ways, both insistent on their own computation, and the murmurs from this lovers' tiff floated up into the night.

In Earl's Court curses were floating up into the night. The unsuccessful and consequently very drunken plaintiff in a recent King's Bench Division case, *The Red Man's Syndicate v. Associated Newspapers*, had come back to visit the site of the

Earl's Court Exhibition where it had all started. The *Daily Mail* had accused him of cruelty to cowboys; it was well known that his show was a home from home on the range for cowboys. And all the King's Bench Division had awarded him for this gross blot was one farthing damages.

"I want to go to dear old Idaho," he hiccuped. He wasn't going to get far on a farthing.

How far was M. Paulhan going to get that night in his Farman flying machine? Farther than Claude Graham-White he was sure. All England was following the race to be the first aviator to reach Manchester (balloons didn't count) and all England was shaking its head at the cheek of the damn Frenchman who had dared to challenge an Englishman and over his own soil too! The fellow was a foreigner. What's more, he'd started off a half an hour earlier than Graham-White. Thank heavens Graham-White was an Englishman.

At 7.30 Paulhan passed over Stratford-upon-Avon where Sir Frank Benson was about to give "Two Gentlemen". "As one Gentleman to another . . .," he was saying. Graham White was way behind. Well tried, Graham-White. At 8.10 Paulhan touched down near Lichfield; Graham-White had been forced to land a quarter of an hour before and not nearly so far along the route. A superb attempt by Graham-White. Master of the skies Graham-White was off again at 2.48. Fantastic courage. Paulhan didn't stir his stumps until 4.10. Froggy lie-abed. Unaccountably Paulhan got to Manchester at 5.30, over an hour after Graham-White had been forced to give up at Tamworth. Another triumph for British aeronauts, too bad that it didn't include victory.

"The best man won," said Graham-White with true British sportsmanship.

"Thank you very much," said Paulhan, collecting the cheque for ten thousand pounds.

Argument in Greenwich Park, curses in Earl's Court and the drone of flying machines all over England; but at the wrong end

of Elgin Avenue, how quiet the streets were, where only a distant dog disturbed the night.

"How quiet the streets are," said Miss Green; "just you, me and that dog." She giggled.

Very softly they sang together the two part harmony that they had recently acquired at choir practice.

*"Though poor be the chamber
Come here, come and adore
Lo! The Lord of Heaven . . ."*

"I like Gounod," said Mr. Tooley.

"I'm always so surprised at that E in He-eav-en," said Dinah. She tried it, "*He-eaven*".

"Ah Miss Green, *'If you'd conscientious be
Singer, make a note of E'.*"

They laughed together and their laughter sounded quite loud at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue. "Oh, Mr. Tooley, what would Mr. Perkins say if he knew that we laughed at him like this?"

"Let's hope he won't find out, Miss Green."

"I quite look forward to our walks home."

"Then you're not missing matching your pink ribbons?"

"Oh, I never think about the ribbons now."

This seemed almost a pity to Mr. Tooley, surely Miss Green wasn't one of those off with the old, on with the new young ladies who were so much in evidence these days. Still, if she did not fret it argued a greater happiness. "I'm glad you're happy with us, Miss Green."

"Very happy so long as the late hours don't tell on my voice."

On this point Mr. Tooley had no doubts.

"Clear as a bell!"

Before crossing the road they stopped for a moment to let a cab clopper down towards Kensington. A pretty face crowned in a wide-brimmed cerise velvet hat smiled at the world through

the window; but then a masculine hand, discreet and gentle eased his companion back into the shadows. It gave Mr. Tooley several new ideas. "I sometimes think I should take you home in a cab Miss Green," he said. "The walk must be so fatiguing for you," he explained lamely.

"Oh no, Mr. Tooley. I like a walk. The night air clears my mind."

"I like to walk too. It takes so much longer."

". . . and so Mr. Tooley escorts his inamorata to her home, growing bolder all the time, even singing down the shades of . . . ah . . . Brondesbury Villas. Meanwhile his wife, exhausted after giving her performance, retires worn out to her lonely bed, and waits till Mr. Tooley comes creeping home . . . at last. . . ."

Creeping home indeed, but not into his wife's arms. Quietly shutting the front door, quietly crossing to the den, quietly unlocking his secret self, his diary, and writing a poem.

ODE TO A LADY IN ELGIN AVENUE, he wrote, and then since Gounod's song was running in his mind he matched his metre to its cadences.

*How quiet the street is
You, me and a dog.*

He remembered his masterful masculinity. . . .

How heavy my footsteps fall

He remembered her enchanting femininity. . . .

*Yours hardly touch ground at all,
Walking down quiet streets.
How quiet the street is
You, me and . . .*

He looked about him. How to avoid stale repetition? *A cat* he wrote.

*Say would you be petrified
If I were not by your side? . . .*

He enquired hopefully of the wallpaper.

Walking down quiet streets

There was something that he wished to say that Gounod had not given him room for. Boldly he went ahead.

*Walking and walking
I so enjoy talking to you.
If you enjoy walking and talking
There's nothing that I'd rather do.*

Back to Gounod.

*How quiet the streets are
You, me and the moon.
Does he wonder what we're about,
You and me who are so late out
Walking down quiet streets.*

He read over his work, felt pleased and smiled. He picked up his pen again and added one more line.

Beautifully quiet streets.

Then he looked at his watch. Late out, late up, he could put it off no longer. The stairs creaked.

"Monty, is that you?"

"Yes, Carrie, I thought you'd be asleep."

"Oh no, I'm not tired. I've been waiting for you."

"Now's the time you should rest yourself, Carrie, you're overtired."

"But I want to have a chat. You haven't said a word all evening. Did you notice Mrs. Robinson's face when we served a choice of sweet? And did you see the way she shut her old

man up when he got a bit jolly with me? It's no pleasure to entertain people like that. Give me the Hackeys every time."

"I've asked the Browns on Wednesday."

"You never told me, love. An' we don't owe them any hospitality. They never ask us round although they only live two doors away. The only time I sent round to ask to borrow a bottle of stout they said they hadn't got a bottle in the house."

"I thought you liked to have your friends in."

"My friends like the Hackeys. Your friends too, of course. But the Browns aren't my friends or yours. They aren't anybody's friends. They just happen to live in the same road. You'll be asking the Band of Hope man from number ten before I know where I am."

"Oh, I'm sorry if I've put you out, Carrie. I thought. . . ."

"Oh, you haven't put me out. Don't you worry, love, let 'em all come, I'll entertain 'em! Now be a good hubby and get your clothes off and put the light out."

"Now, Carrie, I don't like to see you so excitable. I want you to turn over and close your eyes and go to sleep."

"I don't want to turn over yet, Monty. I want a bit of comfort. I don't want to go to sleep yet."

"I'm afraid the late hours may tell on your voice."

"I'll look after my voice, love, if you'll look after me."

"That's what I'm trying to do, Carrie. That's why I want you to go to sleep."

"It's no good, Monty, I can't get to sleep, and if I do it's only to wake up again."

"But you must have a good night's rest, Carrie. We'll have to go to the doctor. What you want's a sleeping draught."

"I don't want a sleeping draught. I want my husband. I want you, Monty."

"You've got me," said Mr. Tooley. His voice was dull. His shoulders sagged.

Sad and suddenly quiet, Fairy looked up at him, "Not really, Monty, not any more."

"Come on, Carrie, calm yourself.

*"Go to sleep my little Picaninny
Daddy's going to slap you if you don't.*

"I'll take you to Doctor. We'll go together.

*"Hush-a-bye, lullaby,
Daddy's little baby
Daddy's little Alabama coon.*

"Saturday afternoon surgery. That'll be convenient.

*"Lula, lula, lula, lula-loo
Underneath the stars and silvery moon*

"He'll give you something to make you sleep.

*"Hush-a-bye, lullaby,
Daddy's little baby
Daddy's little Alabama coon."*

Six

BREAKFAST in Boscobel Gardens but no need to ask what was in *The Times* that morning, for it was May the sixth and even Ellaline knew what news her Frederick would find there.

The life of King Edward VII, his people's beloved "Teddy", the friend of bankers, all Europe's "Peacemaker", baby Kerpel's "Kingy", was slowly drawing to a close. In ten years he had replaced Queen Victoria, the mother of her people, in their hearts and had become the father of his people.

"I shall never be able to think of the Prince of Wales when they play 'God save the King'," said Ellaline.

"Things will never be the same again," said Frederick, pushing aside his untouched kedgerree.

And up at Greenwich on this ironically fine May morning hearts were even heavier.

"Poor old Teddy," said Ella, "he never 'ad a chance. His mother never gave him scope."

"He made the most of what he did get," said Fred admiringly. "The Jersey Lily," he added wistfully.

"Lily?" said Ella. She sniffed. "Somehow it won't seem right on the tea caddies at Christmas, the Prince and Princess of Wales, instead of him and Queen Alexandra."

"And the stamps," said Fred.

"Things'll never be the same again."

At luncheon tables all over the land from the top of the social scale to the bottom, from Mrs. Herbert Asquith who was entertaining Lord Kitchener at No. 10 Downing Street to Mr. Clarence Hackey who was entertaining Mrs. Hackey to a lobster and a glass of stout at Sheekey's, there was no other topic. "Things will never be the same again," said Lord Kitchener, and sadly Margot Asquith agreed with him. "Things will never be the same again," said Clarence Hackey and his Elvira nodded her only black-plumed hat and wiped a tear from her beady eye.

How many political crises would be left in mid-air? How high would the morals of the new court rise and how low their spirits sink, with only the steady flow of swear-words from he who was to be our Sailor-King to act as a safety valve? How dull and worthy and middle-class would the new court be with the old cynical amusing gloss of international society banished by one of the new Queen's raised eyebrows; and would her flowered toques ever make her as beloved as Queen Alexandra's enamelled cheek? King Edward appreciated beauty in women, conversation in boudoirs, and feminine skill at the card table. But then he had strange, even advanced tastes. He liked Jews, he liked theatres, he liked money, he liked spending it—on beautiful women. He knew more about foreign policy than anyone—things would never be the same again.

Not that the King was dead yet.

Only yesterday there he was propped up in a chair in his old blue velvet smoking-jacket, stroking his terrier's ear and saying, "I shall work to the end . . . of what use is it to be alive if

one cannot work? Ask Mrs. Keppel to come to tea." Only yesterday Mrs. Keppel came and poured out, and in spite of her misgivings he insisted on smoking a cigar, or at least starting it. After a fit of coughing, he said, "If this lasts much longer, I am done for."

Did he believe his words? Mrs. Keppel did, for on her return to No. 30 Portman Square her anxiety hung like a great cloud over the house, and troubled the faces of those who loved baby Keppel. Nannie's face, Moisselle's face, Papa's face, even sister Violet's face; and for the first time in baby Keppel's memory Mama's face was cold, unsmiling.

"Done for," the King had said; but did he believe his own words? Lord Islington who had had an audience that morning upon his appointment as Governor of New Zealand would have borne him out. "I don't know what other people feel, but I think I've been with a dying man today!" he said to his wife, who repeated it to Margot Asquith, and after lunch it was all over London. That lunch at which Kitchener of Khartoum shocked Mrs. Asquith by leaving the table and striding to the window and pronouncing cheerfully, "The flag's still flying at the palace."

The King was of course unable to get to Victoria to greet his homeward hurrying Queen. At the Palace they were putting up a notice. "His Majesty is suffering from a severe bronchial attack and has been confined to his room for the last two days." By 8 o'clock three physicians had added their signatures to an amended bulletin. *The Times* noted next morning that they had omitted the word "severe".¹ "His Majesty's condition causes some anxiety," they added instead, and signed it F. H. Laking, M.D., James Reid, M.D., and R. Douglas Powell, M.D. Mr. Laking and Mr. Reid stayed on to sleep at the Palace. The chances are that they had a good night. Everything had been done to ensure that the King might sleep. The carriage-ways were covered with peat to deaden the horses' hooves and the

¹ "Well they would, wouldn't they?" said Ella.

rattle of carriage wheels; and inside the Palace, no voice was heard.

And the people kept vigil outside, kept it quietly and sadly; and the newsboys crying the special editions in the Strand were too far away to disturb the ill man. They disturbed the theatre-goers all right. Miss Jessie Bateman and Miss Nancy Price, playing in "The Whip" at Drury Lane, had the unusual experience of seeing the audience leaving in droves before the final curtain fell; so did Fred Terry and Julia Neilson in their revival of "The Scarlet Pimpernel" at the New, smaller droves because a smaller theatre. Impelled by the urgent newsboys outside, the audience left "Trelawney of the Wells" in mid-career at the Duke of York's, Irene Vanbrugh for once a lesser attraction; and they rose from "The Arcadians" at the Shaftesbury in spite of the merry Pipes of Pan. Dan Rolyat, Ada Blanche, Harry Welchman, "Bunch" Keyes, and the new girl Cicely Courtneidge consoled themselves by remembering that although there would be a few more hundred performances of "The Arcadians", there was only one King Edward. And in the limelight, under the smiles and greasepaint, Lewis Waller in "The Rivals" at the Lyric, Lily Elsie in "The Dollar Princess" at Daly's and Cyril Maude and Marie Lohr at the Playhouse all felt the same. There was little heart in the music halls that night—although there was a good deal of variety. Gaby Deslys at the Alhambra; Lydia Kyasht and Adolph Bolm with George Robey at the Empire in "Hello London!" Pavlova and Mordkin at the Palace with Margaret Cooper. Albert Whelan and the Bioscope. Spirit Pictures at the Pavilion, as well as Zona Vèvey, Bert Coote, Charles Coborn, and James Fawn. And at the Tivoli, Wilkie Bard, Mark Sheridan, Chirgwin, Victoria Monks, Clarence Hackey, Renée, La Belle Alva, Gladys Sears, Lilly Black, Phil Ray, Ernest Shand and "Hester's Mystery" a sketch by Sir Arthur Pinero featuring in a non-speaking role C. Easthope Warrender, who had yet to realise that this engagement would disqualify him from drawing his

thirty-shillings from the Westminster Labour Exchange that week.

After his show Clarence Hackey packed Elvira and a pile of papers into the cab and went on to find an unusually sparse audience at the Kilburn Empire for his last house. To Fairy the sight of retreating backs was no new thing; only usually they were making for the bar and not for whichever High Road she happened to be playing.

It was a sad cab ride that the Hackeys undertook to the wrong end of Elgin Avenue that night, just to drop Fairy, for it was Thursday, and come captains and depart kings "The Messiah" must go on.

"I don't know how you got your laughs tonight, Clarrie," said Fairy.

"They weren't bad. They lapped up 'Hi-tiddley-hi-ti', and it went even better at the Tivoli."

Fairy turned to Elvira. "I couldn't do a thing with 'em with 'Joshua'."

"Well, never mind, dear. It's black Thursday. I've no doubt choir practice went very nicely," she finished darkly.

"Now, Elvira," Clarrie cautioned her.

"Well, I do think it's a shame the way Fairy does the work so Monty can go gallivantin'."

"I wouldn't exactly call choir practice gallivantin'. Not my idea of it anyway, eh Fairy?"

Fairy hardly noticed Clarrie's dig in the ribs. "Monty's the quiet sort," she said. "I don't have to worry about him that way."

But Elvira wouldn't let that go by without taking a peck at it. Every black feather in her hat and boa, every black jet tassel quivered and her bird eyes flashed. "That's just the sort you do have to worry about, dear. That little Dinah, she's quiet too."

"Dinah?"

"Yes, they're very much two of a kind."

"I s'pose they are."

"Well, I'm glad you can see that, dear. Clarrie and me have been wondering, haven't we, Clarrie?"

"Well, not wondering. . . ."

"You see, there's all that taking her home."

Clarrie took his cue.

*"I saw Peter Henry home last night
For the sake of company. . . ."*

"Shut up, Clarrie, this is serious."

"Monty and that little mouse." Fairy considered them. "I can't believe it."

"Birds of a feather," said Elvira, stroking her own. "Don't you fret about the bold approach, that never lasts, my dear. Watch, when the smiles demure and," she put her finger on it, "thin. Look out for the downcast eye, that conceals a wink. And think, that minx is the one to scotch. Oh yes! It's the quiet ones you've got to watch."

"Monty and that little mousel" Fairy said again.

"It's always been the quiet ones."

"Oh yes, I've seen these quiet ones, not a word to say."

"They're only out to snare your men, in their quiet way."

"Her mouth wouldn't melt a butter pat."

"Don't be taken in by that. When you draw the blind you'll find that she took you down a notch. Oh yes! It's the quiet ones that we have got to watch!"

"Monty's a very quiet one."

"Yes, a sly and quiet one."

"Oh no. He's not sly! I can't believe that Monty would."

"Don't you think that Dinah might? Don't you think she'd try?"

"Well. . . ."

"Don't you think you should make sure? Oh yes, it's the quiet ones that aren't so pure, so nice, so sweet, so prim, when they're alone with him. They're the bloodsucking man-eating, home-leaving, low, deceiving, root of evil," she paused for

breath—"and the stem," she added, "that's what I think of them!"

"Have it your own way," said Fairy, "but Monty's not my worry." She turned to Clarrie. "It's my material," she said, not for the first time.

"Songs aren't what they used to be," said Clarrie sympathetically.

"I wonder if I should dress it up a bit. You know, like the girls do in America with half a dozen piccaninnies singing and dancing behind me."

Fairy Felcher had been reading the *Stage Year Book* one of those nights while she was waiting without much hope for her Monty "going over his accounts" in his den. "Notes on the American Scene" she had come across. She pulled the cutting out of her handbag and read it to them. "After singing a few songs on their own, many so-called single women acts carry 'insurance' in the form of piccaninnies, or 'picks' as they are called. They bring out the picks (a group of negro kids that really can sing and dance) for a 'sock' finish. Tops are Grace La Rue and her Inky-Dinks, Phina and Her Picks, Josephine Saxton and Her Four Picks, Laura Comstock's Picks—(three white boys blacked up), Ethel Whiteside and Her Picks, Mayme Remington and Her Black Buster, Brownie Ethiopian Prodigie's, Emma Kraus and Her Dutch Picks (singing in German and dressed as Dutch kids)."

"There's a snag," sniffed Elvira. "Where'd you find your picks?"

"There's another act," said Fairy, "Canta Day and her White Picks. If she can do it, so can I."

"White picks indeed," said Elvira. She twitched her black veil.

"I've got a better idea," said Clarrie. "Why don't you take a week out, old girl? If the old boy dies there'll be closed doors until he's underground. . . ."

"But supposing he doesn't die?"

This was too much for Elvira encased in her black. She patted it. "He'll die," she said.

"Poor old bastard," said Clarence Hackey reverently, "it's no time for you to start supporting six little boys black or white, Fairy. Leave that to their mothers; and fathers," he added as an afterthought. "If they know 'em," he added as a further afterthought. "If you take a week out, old girl, you can have a rest and a bit of a look round and make sure everything's all right. You won't be wasting your time, You can work a bit at your repertoire. It often helps to take a number out and put it back when they least expect it. I heard a number the other night'd just suit you.

*"Who were you with last night
Out in the pale moonlight. . ."*

"Clarrie, where's your tact?"

"A week out?" said Fairy doubtfully.

"A week out's not a bad idea," Elvira chipped in. "And a fortnight out's a better one. Take a rest while you can."

"That sleeping mixture Doctor gave me makes me feel heavy—even when I'm doing my act. An' I could take over the cooking myself for a week just to show I'm still mistress in my own home."

"That's right, dear. I would, dear," said Elvira.

"After all it is my kitchen." The cab pulled up. It was the wrong end of Elgin Avenue already. "Clarrie," said Fairy as he helped her out, "you don't really think that Monty? . . . that Monty? . . ."

"'Course we don't. That's just a bit of Elvira's badinage . . . she's suspicious, she is, aren't you, love? She even thinks she's got to keep an eye on me. She's got a nasty suspicious nature has my old Dutch. Give us a kiss, love."

Fairy waved the married lovers goodbye and the cab clattered off. Elvira had all the luck. "It's been a bad year. A bad year," Fairy said to the night.

1910.

"It's been a bad year," Dr. Crippen was saying. Was he beginning to miss Belle's bit of money? "It's been a bad year, but we've put all that behind us." He leapt to his feet and took the empty scuttle from Ethel's hand. "Don't you go down in the cellar dear, I'll get the coal."

1910.

A bad year for Bernhardt too. In Paris she had been counting up her losses on the Italian success that she had had specially translated. She had also been counting up her losses on the four French successes that she had had specially written. And she was trying to balance them with the small profit she had made on her revival of "La Dame aux Camelias".

Rejane had had her successes too. Thousands of francs thrown away on an adaptation of an English novel. Thousands more thrown away on discovering two new French authors. Nothing to put against it but a few francs made on her old success Hennequin's "M'Amour" first produced ten years ago at the Palais Royal and which by now bored the Divine Rejane as much as "La Dame aux Camelias" bored the Divine Sarah.

Indeed the two ladies had good reason to remember
1910.

From her snow leopard the Divine Sarah addresses her own pale-green face in the pale-green looking-glass.

"Rappel Nineteen-ten, ma cherie? Me, I prefer to forget it!"

1910.

In London by 10 o'clock the next morning the cavalcade of carriages was already rolling silently over the peat, bearing callers to sign the book at Buckingham Palace. The scene brought out a lyric strain in the special correspondent of *The Times*. He jotted down a few notes. "The Royal Standard flew gaily over the Palace in the strong breeze and a brilliant sun,

only briefly hidden, now and again, by a piece of white cloud shone smilingly down upon the scene." He closed his notebook, not without satisfaction, and popped into the Palace to see who had signed the visitor's book so far: the usual Royals, and Lord Rothschild, which might have been foreseen; Lord Rosebery, Lord Salisbury, Mrs. Asquith, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, who was clearly doomed to hang the marble pillars of his larger canvasses with purple drapes for the next few months, half the Corps Diplomatique and, he puzzled a little over the name, Archdeacon Sinclair. He came out into the sun again, blinking but well pleased. In the emotion of the moment he had left his sandwiches beside the visitors book. And such was the sadness of the hour that he could not remember where he had put them. Towards evening, hunger began to sharpen his style. "An air of quiet, restrained apprehensiveness settled on the crowd which now seemed to have become stationary. A solid mass, joined now and then at the edges by youths and maidens from the surrounding suburbs who rode up on bicycles and waited patiently to hear the latest news. The falling dusk intensified the impressiveness of the scene and the Palace seemed to withdraw itself into a gloom only relieved by a few lighted windows."

Inside one of them the King lay dying; breathing heavily, unable to speak; and his mind now ranged, now lingered. Ranged over his early tutors; lingered over his later loves, his ladies, his horses, his dogs. From his basket in the corner Caesar looked up at his Monarch and Master, faithful and troubled and dumb. Caesar who had turned ten years into a life's friendship.

Oh, those tutors in the early days! Poor prim moralising gentlemen, appointed to underline the difference between himself and other boys; and of these poor prim gentlemen the first was a lady. Lady Lyttleton who presided over his A.B.C. She was succeeded by the aptly named Rev. H. M. Birch. He had wept tears when Mr. Birch gave way to Mr. F. W. Gibbes, a

Fellow of Trinity. By the time Mr. Gibbes moved on he was seventeen and too grown up to weep, or so they told him. Edinburgh, Oxford, his education swam before him, drifted away from him, leaving behind only Dr. Lyon Playfair, who taught him chemistry which he found amusing and Dr. Schnitz, who taught him Roman History which he did not.

The Nuremberg Clock on his writing-table struck eight, almost he could have hugged its silvery chime when it broke the silence that they had imposed around him. If it had been at Sandringham it would have been put forward a half an hour. All the clocks at Sandringham were half an hour fast. He liked them that way, it gave him that much more light for shooting. But even that precaution did not provide dear Alex with enough time to be punctual he remembered, let alone early. Even at the Coronation he'd had to go to her room personally, watch in hand, and tell her that if she didn't come immediately she wouldn't be crowned Queen of England. He'd had so much to say and to do and to see to since Mama's death. Perhaps it made up for the responsibility she had denied him all her life. It was a challenge he had taken up the moment he came aboard the Royal yacht *Alberta* which carried her remains from Osborne. He had had to ask the Commander why the flag was at half-mast. "The Queen is dead, sir," the officer had replied. "But the King is alive," he'd told him firmly, and saw to it that the Standard was hoist.

His mind glided on to happier occasions. The Theatre. He'd seen a lot of plays that year; nine in February alone, "The Dollar Princess", "Our Miss Gibbs", "The Importance of Being Earnest" he was glad Wilde's plays were coming back. He remembered turning round and tipping his hat to him in Nice to cheer the poor fellow up. "Alias Jimmy Valentine" was the last play he'd seen. Gerald du Maurier. Good-looking fellow. Knew how to wear his clothes. He himself had always had his own ideas about clothes. It was a thousand pities those side creases he had introduced into trousers to conceal his bandy

legs last year in Marienbad hadn't taken on. They hadn't taken on the year before in London either. Not like that accident in Paris with his bottom waistcoat button. Nobody buttoned their bottom waistcoat button now.

Paris! His first visit in 1855. The Comtesse d'Armaille hadn't been very impressed by Mama when the Royal procession drove into the courtyard of the new Gare de Strasbourg. "Small, plump, plainly dressed with nothing majestic about her", she had written. She hadn't been very impressed with Papa either; "very bald for his age and looking very tired." But of himself, the little boy in Highland dress, she had had quite different views. "He kept looking all around as if anxious to lose nothing of these last moments in Paris." "I'd like to stay here," he said to the Empress Eugenie. And when she suggested that Mama would not like to be parted from him he had his answer ready. "Don't think that. We have eight children at home and they can get on quite well without us."

Paris. It was odd that the boy hadn't taken to it. The boy's boy hadn't even seen it yet; but then he wasn't ten yet and there was plenty of time. Time. "Time over again"; the thought flashed through his mind and the ladies came swanning back.

His ladies; charming companions, confidantes; Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough, trying so consistently to become Consuelo, not Duchess of Marlborough, Mrs. Cornwallis West, and that lovely head of hair. Had it always been a ~~w~~g? He couldn't remember. Lady Londonderry, Mrs. Willie James, Lady Lonsdale, Lady Warwick trying to make him understand why she had become a socialist when he didn't in the least want to know. Lily. Ah Lily! And especially when he saw her for the first time framed in that circle of male admirers at Allen Young's house in Stratford Place. That was the summer of the yachts; the *Helen*, the *Osborne* and his Mother's *Alberta*, where Lily had to be smuggled aboard and kept down below out of range of the Osborne telescope with which Mama might be keeping a

watchful eye on him. Lovely woman Lily, but a damn bad actress!

And Alice. Only a couple of hours ago dear Alex had sent for her and led her in to see him herself; and he had known for certain, if indeed there was any doubt left in his mind, that he was done for. And baby Keppel. No more bread and butter games. She would be puzzled and frightened by the dark blinds in 30 Portman Square.

It was a pity that Death frightened people. He wasn't frightened. A little annoyed perhaps that he hadn't been able fully to enjoy Witch of the Air's victory that afternoon. Nice of the boy to walk across from Marlborough House and put him in the picture. He'd never be able to give Persimmon a lump of sugar or a carrot again, or turn the handle of the barrel organ at Sandringham again, or listen to Gottlieb's (London) German band or pour brandy over Christopher Sykes' head for the pleasure of hearing him say, "As your Majesty pleases." Would they have brandy in Heaven?

He bet they would in the Other Place.

In the larder in the house at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue, Mr. Tooley was reaching for the cooking brandy.

"It's medicinal, Miss Green; and you seem so distressed."

More sobs greeted his solicitude.

"Won't you let me call a cab?"

"But I want to talk to you, Mr. Tooley. I want to talk to you." Her voice rose alarmingly. For a quiet girl she was making a lot of noise. Mr. Tooley did his best to soothe her.

"I was looking forward to a quiet chat in the cab."

"Not just a chat, Mr. Tooley. I want to talk to you."

"Then come into my den, Miss Green. We can't have you distressed."

"Monty! Monty!"

The voice from upstairs pursued them across the hall.

"Coming, Carrie. Coming. Step into my den then, Miss

Green. She won't disturb us here. I'll be up in a moment, Carrie," he called. Quietly he closed the door of the den and stood very close to her. "Now, Miss Green, tell me what is the matter." But all that she could manage in the way of enlightenment was a sob. "If it's anything I can do, Miss Green, you know you've only to ask."

She managed a sentence through the sobs. "You took me away from the ribbons."

"You don't want to go back?"

"You took me away from the ribbons. It was steady. It was every week."

"So is your position here, Miss Green, for as long as you like to stay."

"It was ten shillings a week. It's all right for her to take a holiday, but I've got to pay my rent."

Mr. Toolev was holding her now. Very gently it is true, but he was holding her; "Now, now, Miss Green, try to speak clearly, tell me what's wrong. Has Carrie been scolding you?"

"It was the way she said it. And what she said. She doesn't need me."

Mr. Toolev couldn't take it in at one go. "Doesn't need you?"

"She's going to take a holiday," Miss Green explained in tones of extreme despair. "Whether the King dies or not she's going to take two weeks off and cook her own meals. After all, it is her kitchen."

"But it isn't August!"

"It's awful, Mr. Tooley. And there's my rent."

Mr. Tooley discovered that his hand was on her shoulder. He patted it. She did not shrug it off, and thus encouraged he even dared to smoothe her hair. Courage begot courage. "I know what we can do, Miss Green. Don't worry. You're going to have a nice little holiday. But," he added quickly, "it's holiday with pay."

She removed his hand from her hair. "Mrs. Tooley didn't say anything about pay."

"We won't tell Mrs. Tooley."

Oh, the sweet excitement of a secret shared; but the china-blue eyes looked up at him aghast.

"But I couldn't take money from you, Mr. Tooley. Not without earning it. That would be charity, and the Greens have never stooped to charity."

"Do it to give me pleasure, Miss Green. It will give me pleasure, you know. Such pleasure. Its been so pleasant having you here, Miss Green. It's made all the difference."

"Oh."

"Miss Green, would you do something for me. Stand over there by the mantle so the light falls on your face."

"Oh!"

"Yes, Miss Green, I love your face. It's a beautiful shape."

"Oh!"

"I know how it looks when you're bending over the kitchen range and the steam from the greens rises round you like a mist. I know how it looks across the supper table; calm and serene 'cause you've served it up and it looks so appetising. I know how it looks under the gas lamps 'cause I've walked you home so many times; and I know just how it looks when you find top C like a bell. Holy you look. Holy. And too good for me."

"Oh!"

"I don't know what it looks like in the early morning," he said urgently.

"Monty!" Carrie's voice, with its insistence, was pulling him back to a familiar bondage.

"I don't know what it looks like in the early morning," he said desperately.

"Monty!"

"Wait here, Miss Green. Wait here."

"I don't think I should, Mr. Tooley. I ought to go. I must go at once."

"You must wait. You must. I've only got to give her her sleeping draught. I'll be back again before you know."

Doubt lay heavy on Miss Green's porcelain brow.
"Well. . . ."

"If only I could see it in the morning—just once."

And he turned and hastened up the stairs to Carrie. His Carrie with her song for every occasion. And her song for this occasion beat in his mind with every step,

*"Choose her in the morning early
See her if admissible
In her deshabille
That's right!"*

". . . and so Montague Tooley tore himself away from the Messalina of Brondesbury Villas and went upstairs to that sad lady who was his wife. . . ."

Rufus Isaacs paused. No one could pause like Rufus Isaacs. Young Montague Shearman, whose fingers had been itching to open the American law report that he had received through the post that morning, resisted temptation no longer, deeming that it was a dull oaf who could not read and listen at the same time. He tore open the package. He turned to the first case, *The Cherry Sisters v. The Des Moines Leader* (114 Iowa 298, 86 N.W. 323). Young Mr. Montague Shearman listened no more. He read avidly.

The Cherry Sisters were known as "The Vegetable Twins". They played behind a net and audiences were encouraged to bring their own vegetables and throw them at the sisters. Originally there were five of them, but Death had claimed two for his All Time Bill of Varieties and Addie, Effie and Jessie, who had no idea that as artistes they were execrable and blamed their managers for cruel receptions throughout the land, were all that remained to show the Stars and Stripes.

Addie and Effie did Salvation Army girls. They were tall and

thin, while Jessie was short and plump. They also wore drum-major costumes and sang about themselves to the tune of "Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay". They had voices like the rattle of an empty coal-scuttle. "For Fair Columbia" was sung by Jessie, the composer. A ballad, "My Daddy and Marna were Irish", composed by Lizzie (the absent one) was sung by Addie and Effie in calico gowns, white aprons and straw hats. Jessie then sang "The Bicycle Ride". Next Effie came on wearing a pair of grey trousers, Prince Albert coat, high hat, and small moustache and carrying a grip, and sang "The Travelling Man". Other numbers were "Corn Juice" by Jessie, and "Gypsy Warning" by Addie, Effie and Jessie. And they finished with a tableau "Clinging to the Cross", and for an encore, "The Goddess of Liberty".

Mr. Montague Shearman could not have known all this and his eyes opened wide as he started to read the case.

"An action brought by three public performers calling themselves 'Cherry Sisters' upon the following writing. . . ."

"The following writing" was going to be interesting, young Mr. Shearman thought. What is fair comment? He read on to see how the defendants, the *Des Moines Leader*, had described the three sisters.

"Effie is an old jade of 50 summers, Jessie a frisky filly of 40, and Addie, the flower of the family, a capering monstrosity of 35. Their long skinny arms, equipped with talons at the extremities, swung mechanically, and anon waved frantically at the suffering audience. The mouths of their rancid features opened like caverns and sounds like the wailing of damned souls issued therefrom. They pranced around the stage with a motion that suggested a cross between the dance du ventre and the fox-trot—strange creatures with painted faces and hideous mien. Effie is spavined, Addie is string-halt, and Jessie, the only one who showed her stockings, has legs with calves as classic in their outlines as the curves of a broom handle."

"Strong stuff," thought Montague Shearman.

And yet when the judge had seen the act he held "that the defendant had showed that he was not actuated by malice and

was merely criticising a coarse public performance and it was held proper to direct a verdict against the three sisters".

"They'll never get to Chicago.

At the Old Bailey Rufus Isaacs was getting to the point.

". . . This sad lady, the ailing wife of Montague Tooley, not so young as her rival, without even the consolation of applause which came to her fellow-artistes as if by right, was sick at heart and sick of waiting. Remember the hour, Gentlemen of the Jury. It was midnight. The time when loving husbands seek out their wives. The time when Montague Tooley habitually gave his wife her sleeping mixture. Why, on this particular night, did he give her an overdose?

"Ask yourselves, Gentlemen of the Jury. My learned friend will doubtless tell you that Montague Tooley's thoughts were downstairs; that his senses were excited; that his hand was unsteady; that his passions were aroused; that a man so inflamed might make a mistake. But we, men and women of the world, know better.

"Poor woman. Poor wife. . . ."

"Monty," the poor woman, poor wife was saying. "You do love me?"

"Of course I do, dear. Now where's your sleeping draught?"

"I've taken it, Monty. I felt so tired."

Mr. Tooley looked at her reproachfully. "Carrie, you must never do that again," he said, kind but firm. "Doctor said I must measure it very carefully."

Fairy flung herself back on to her pillows.

"Fussy old fool. Half the time you don't give me enough to get me off to sleep at all."

"I give you all you're allowed."

"And you do love me?"

The flatness seeped back into Mr. Tooley's voice. "I said I did."

"'Till the sands of the desert grow cold?" " she begged. A song for every occasion.

"Now don't exert yourself, Carrie, lie down! Close your eyes, there's a good girl!"

"Oh, Monty, you're not going."

But Monty was already at the door.

"I've got to turn off the gas in the den."

"I'll be asleep."

He opened the door. "I'll be here when you wake up," he said.

"I'll be asleep."

By now he was half-way down the stairs. Too far away to hear her.

"Come back soon," she murmured and then, very quietly, as though singing to her child, she crooned

*" . . . Lula, lula lula lula-loo
Underneath the stars and silvery moon
Hush-a-bye, lullaby,
Mummy's little baby,"*

She yawned.

"Mummy's little Alabama,"

Another yawn.

"Alabama."

A long drifting yawn, and then the rest was silence.

It was quiet outside Buckingham Palace, and underneath the stars and silvery moon the large crowd swayed very gently like poplars in the night. They were watching a member of the Royal Household pin a notice on the Palace Gates. Having affixed it, he turned and spoke to the crowd.

"The King is dead," he said, in a low, impressive tone.

The man from *The Times* pressed forward, his note-book open, his pencil ready.

"The news was received in silence, every man present from the gentlemen who had come round from the clubs to the ragged man who, perhaps, had no resting place for the night, raising his hat in an awe-stricken silence. Social distinctions were forgotten, rich and poor turned to one another for sympathy, each in his own way gave expression to the general grief. Not even the closing of the great iron gates at 1.15 a.m. modified the desire still to stand and watch the place where their beloved sovereign had breathed his last."

The man from *The Times* went home to bed.

When Mr. Tooley re-entered the den it was a very different Miss Green who greeted him.

"Oh, there you are, Mr. Tooley, I was just going."

It was a Miss Green who knew at last, for sure, just where she stood.

"Going?" said Mr. Tooley; "but she'll be asleep. You can't go yet, Miss Green. We've got so much to talk about."

"What, Mr. Tooley?"

The directness of the approach was quite a shock to him. "Well . . . well . . . w-what are you going to do during your holiday?"

"I haven't thought, Mr. Tooley, I've hardly had time. I'm not one of your fine clients with a rich husband to take me abroad."

Mr. Tooley tried a joke. "On your honeymoon, Miss Green?"

"Oh, Mr. Tooley, what a thing to say!"

"We could make a day excursion, Miss Green. . . ."

Miss Green meant to have it in the verbal equivalent of black and white. "We, Mr. Tooley?"

"I could take a day off from the office. There's a train that goes to Epping Forest. All the way." A shade crossed his face.

"Of course, I'd have to be back to fetch Carrie from the theatre."

"She's not playing next week."

"Oh, so she isn't. Well, we'll just get back at the ordinary time; just like any office day. Only, Miss Green," he moved a step nearer, "it couldn't be a bit like any other ordinary day if you'd come with me. It'd be heaven." The memory of that first sherry and lemonade at The Bodega came flooding back. "It'd be Barcelona, Paris, Venice and the Pyramids all rolled together in one round trip." He looked in vain for some response in her face. "They say see Naples and die; but if I could take Miss Green to Epping Forest I'd have lived!"

"I've never been to the wax-works."

This was a terrible thought. Sacrilege almost. "It isn't quiet there, Miss Green. I want you alone and still. I want you all to myself. I'm greedy for you." He gulped. "I want you like now, with the world shut out. Just us, Miss Green. Just us."

The firm line of her mouth did not relax.

"But, Mr. Tooley, you're a married man, and my family . . . we've always been respectable."

"I love you, Miss Green. I love you."

"It isn't right, Mr. Tooley; Mrs. Tooley trusts us."

"She won't know. She'll never know any more than she would if she was asleep. Like she is now."

Miss Green tried to move away, but the little man was clutching her. "It isn't nice to plot and plan," she objected, "to scheme with her sleeping the sleep of the innocent above us."

"Miss Green, I'm going to kiss you."

"No, Mr. Tooley, no!"

"Yes, Miss Green, yes. . . . Dinah. . . . Dinah."

A song for every occasion?

I always hold with havin' it, if you fancy it.

If you fancy it, that's understood!

And suppose it makes you fat

I don't worry over that

'Cos a little of what you fancy does you good.

Seven

THOUGH 1910 saw the death of Edward the Peacemaker, it saw, too, many a birth from among which we cull that of Jean-Louis Barrault (Rappel 1910 Jean-Louis? How could you?) Abe Burrows, John Clements, Patience Collier, Constance Cummings, Cyril Cusack, George Devine, Katherine Dunham, Joyce Grenfell, Griffith Jones, Rachel Kempson, Robert Macdermot and Diana Morgan (in birth they were not divided), Alan Melville and Anne Ziegler. . . .

Sixteen stars, some bigger than others, danced and under that they were born.

At No. 5, Boscobel Gardens, Frederick Cooper-Jones noted in the Births column of *The Times*, the gift of a son to his old friend Frank Allen at 12 Curzon Road, Waterloo, Liverpool—noted it, but not with the pleasure that he would have felt on any ordinary occasion—for today the six columns of *The Times* were framed by seven heavy black borders. The last time the paper had gone into mourning was for the death of Queen Victoria. They were not to get out the black border again in

Printing House Square until King George V died. Ellaline touched her temple with her black-bordered handkerchief. No need to ask Frederick if there was anything in the papers today.

No need, in Greenwich Park, to ask Fred either. Ella sewed on at the black square that she was attaching to Fred's well-worn sleeve. And in this they were not alone, as *The Times* was to chronicle.

"Even in the front ranks of the procession of workers cityward, some emblems of mourning were to be seen and later as men, women and children were borne inwards in countless numbers by tramway, train, tube and omnibus, there were few who did not fittingly give some slight expression of the all-pervading sense of sorrow in their attire. Meanwhile something more than a grey sky and the blackened buildings which are always ready to harmonise with any note of sadness framed London's pageant of mourning. Blinds which had been drawn were lowered again, for shutters that came down, mourning boards went up. Many of the windows of the large West End and City stores were thickly ruled with black lines, and inside the displays of stock of drapers, milliners, and jewellers and outfitters underwent a rapid transformation to meet the requirements of a nation in mourning. Overhead flags at half-mast seemed to multiply as if by magic at Government offices, embassies and legations, banks, hotels and offices. The heavy black type of newspaper placards, placed, or held along the street, the notices on closed doors at the theatres, and even the newspapers which seemed to be in every hand contributed to the sombre aspect of the streets. London in an hour was clothed in mourning."

All over London blinds were drawn. Behind them there was sorrow and respect. But at one house at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue blinds were drawn and behind them was guilty fulfilment. Somewhere between waking and sleeping Mr. Tooley stirred in his den and gave half his mind to some lines that were part poem and part dream.

*Stay in our kitchen;
Stay to make tea;
Stay to make turnovers;
Stay here for me.*

"Stay?" he thought sharply, a twinge of consciousness, if not conscience attacking him, as he gazed at the slumbering Dinah, her hair a wispy cloud for the first time since he had known her.

"Stay!" he thought again. Carrie would be waking. "She must go." But just as he was about to shake her she stirred and made a little moan, and he relented and in spite of the dire danger he was touched and slipped into the kitchen to make her a cup of tea.

When he returned with it her eyes were open.

"What time is it, Mr. Tooley?"

"Call me Monty again."

"Yes, but what time is it?"

"I hate to say it, but you'd better slip off home."

"Mrs. Tooley isn't awake?"

"No, but the skivvy'll be here any minute now and there's the neighbours. They might see."

"Oh, Monty, I've never been ashamed of myself before. You will respect me?"

"'Course I'll respect you; but you've got to put your dress on now."

Inside Mr. Tooley's breast there was war. War between the desire to hurry her off and the desire to let his fingers linger and caress while he did up buttons and popped in hooks.

"When do I see you, Monty? Which day do we go to Epping?"

"I don't know yet."

Panic set in. She swung round with a movement that more than half undid the good work of hooking and buttoning. "Now you've taught me to be ashamed you're not going to leave me to it alone?"

"'Course I'm not, Dinah. But I have to find out at the office which day I can be spared. I'll send you a picture postcard."

It was like offering a child a toy to pacify it; and what's more it worked. "For my album! I'm collecting Gabrielle Ray. But when Monty, when. . . .?"

"So as dawn crept silently over the rooftops alike of Elgin Avenue and Brondesbury Villas," at the Old Bailey Rufus Isaacs was well into his stride, "Mr. Tooley crept as silently upstairs, back to his wife. Can you believe that he expected to find her alive?"

Above the rooftops, above the treetops, above the blinking Bovril sign, above the spires, way up in empirium Fairy was still in bed. Her head pillowed on puffy clouds, she was stirring in her asleep. She stretched her arms and toes but did not open her eyes. It was the delicious moment between waking and sleeping.

"Heaven!"

"Ooh!" she thought. "It's nice to get up in the morning but it's nicer to stay in bed! Monty," she said. "Monty." An angel brought in a harp.

"I can't look a kipper in the face this morning, Monty. I just want a nice cup of tea."

Silently the angel put the harp on the cloud beside the bed and took off.

Fairy stretched again.

"Heaven," she breathed; and she was right.

"Care for a cigar?" said King Edward VII from the next bed-cloud.

"Can you believe that Montague Tooley expected to find his wife alive? Can you believe that he did not know that he had given her an overdose of sleeping draught? Can you believe that his shaking hand carried a cup of tea for any purpose other than to steady his nerves for the gruesome task of disposal that lay ahead of him? Can you . . ."

"Good morning, Carrie, I've brought your cup of tea. Here's your cup of tea Carrie. Carrie. . . ." He put the cup on the bedside table, "Carrie, your tea."

Mr. Tooley leant over the still form of his wife and shook it gently. Then he caught his breath. "Oh, my God, she can't be!

She can't bel!" His knees would no longer hold him. He sank on to the bed. The motion brought the lump lolling over towards him. What could he say? They wouldn't believe him. "What am I going to tell them. They'd never believe me."

Suddenly, and loudly the front door bell jangled. They'd come for him already. Where could he hide? They'd get him anyway. He stumbled downstairs. His hands fumbled with the lock.

"Morning, Mr. Tooley," Ada's wizened face peered whitely at him through her miraculously acquired new black straw.

"Oh, it's you, Ada."

What a relief!

"I'm sorry I'm late."

She'd want to do the room. Dust the den. Make the bed.

"Go away," he said.

"I couldn't find me keys."

"We don't want you any more. Mrs. Tooley's gone away. She's gone away. We don't want you any more."

Ada looked enraged. More to the point, she had her foot in the door. "She can't go away. She's never told me. And what about my wages?"

"She left your wages behind for you."

"I'll want a month you know. And a reference."

"I'll give you one myself of course." Anything to get rid of her.

"Anyway, while I'm here I might as well tidy up." Both feet inside the door.

"No!" shouted Mr. Tooley. He gave her a little push. She did look surprised.

"I've got to pack me apron and things; and you need a cup of tea, Mr. Tooley, look at you, you're all of a shake."

"No, no tea. Go and get your apron and I'll have your reference ready. What do we owe you for a month's wages?"

"Oh, Mrs. Tooley will have seen to that."

"What is the sum?"

"It's twelve and six a week, Mr. Tooley. There's nothing found."

"Fifty shillings. That's two pound ten. Here's three pounds. I don't want any change."

"Oh, that is kind, Mr. Tooley. Gone to the country you said . . . very sudden. . . ."

"Yes, Ada, the country."

A song for every occasion.

*My wife's gone to the country
Hooray! Hooray!
She thought it best. I need the rest
That's why she went away.
She took the children with her.
Hooray! Hooray!
I don't care what becomes of me
My wife's gone away!*

It was one of Hackey's songs, he thought, as he closed the door on the mystified but departing Ada.

But Mr. Tooley did care what became of him. He did care, passionately.

"Dinah! Dinah!" was all he could murmur for comfort.

May, 1910. A good month for murders; or at least for murder trials.

In Kansas City Mr. Clarke Hyde was found guilty of murdering his uncle-by-marriage Col. T. H. Swope, who was both a millionaire and a philanthropist.

In Venice murder had taken on a more romantic aspect. The beautiful, or at least fascinating Countess Tarnowska, and two of her three lovers, M. M. Prilnikoff and Naumoff, were convicted of the murder of the third lover, Count Kamarowski. It may of course have been coincidence that the Count's life had been insured in the Countess's favour. But eight years and four

months of solitary confinement now stood between her and the enjoyment of the benefit.

In Vienna it was a military murder. Lt. Hofrichter of the Austrian Army was convicted and sentenced to death. The over-ambitious young Lieutenant had been sending pills through the post to various members of the Austrian general staff. One had taken some and died. The motive ascribed to the defendant was failure to get promotion. If only he had waited a few years—say until 1914, it might have come more quickly.

A good month for connoisseurs of murders but a worrying one for practitioners. At Jays, emporium *par excellence* for mourners and mourning, Miss le Neve had plunged herself into a happy agony of indecision between the small black hat with the large black roses, and the large black hat with the small, black clenched-tight roses.

"Go on, Ethel, take the big one," said Dr. Crippen.

"But it's more expensive," wailed Miss le Neve.

"Take it," said Dr. Crippen masterfully. Was the unaccustomed prodigality but the lightening of spirits before the blow of fate? Only that morning, Belle's friend from America, the inquisitive Mr. Nash, had gone away seeming very puzzled by his explanation of her whereabouts.

Other shops may have been empty of murderers but they were full of the mourning. All over England Emporia were dressing their windows with black and purple. Black hats at Maison Lewis, 210 Regent Street¹; At Woollands "a charming succession of hats for mourning"; Court mourning at Shoolbreds, hats, coats, skirts, feather boas and ruffles; and, a continental touch, mourning sunshades chez Paquin; gloves at the London Glove Company; everything at Peter Robinson; and Liberty Crepe at Liberty's in black, grey and purple from 2s. 11d. a yard, 44 inches wide, patterns free.

London, on this blackest of days, was determined to wear its

¹ "Oh the Partnership!
Things are beginning to bum."

grief on its elbow. How mean of Mr. F. W. Speight of 157 New Bond Street, W.1, to sit down and write a letter to *The Times* pointing out that "the late King had himself made it clear when his beloved mother died that though black was in general use; purple was the correct colour". Mr. Speight had felt it his duty to point this out before too much money was spent. An optimist, Mr. Speight. Every woman looks splendid in black; not every woman can wear purple.

London black; London purple; May the month of lilac; so the gardeners too were full of mourning and all the flags were at half mast.

At Marlborough House the Duke of Cornwall, who had only been the Duke of Cornwall since 11.45 the night before and who was as yet unaware of it, was awakened by a cry from his brother Bertie. The Royal Standard on Buckingham Palace was flying at half mast. So Grandpa was dead.

Later Papa cried when he told them the news. The Duke had never seen Papa cry before. Papa had always seemed so strong. He wondered momentarily whether Papa would die first, and what being King of England would be like. All right perhaps, with the right woman beside you.

"What was that you said about the Royal Standard?" Papa asked sharply, snapping him out of his dream.

"It's flying at half mast over the Palace."

George V looked furious. "That's all wrong," he said. "The King is dead. Long live the King." Then he sent for his equerry, and in what his son describes as "A peremptory naval manner"¹ ordered that a flag be rigged at once on the roof of Marlborough House.

It was to follow him about for twenty-five years.

One man in London was mourning a different death.

*I don't care what becomes of me
My wife's gone away!*

¹ Get that bloody flag rigged up on the roof.

His wife had had a song for every occasion, and this one haunted Mr. Tooley's mind.

"But I do care, Carrie. I do care!" mourned the widower.

Four months later Rufus Isaacs was to make the same point, reading into it a different, more sinister interpretation.

". . . Mr. Tooley had not failed to consider carefully what was to become of him. Fourteen days lay ahead during which Mrs. Tooley, Fairy Felcher, would not be expected at any music hall. Was it mere chance that Mr. Tooley had so much time in which to dispose of the evidence? So many evenings in which to complete the foul work of concealment? It was a confident little man, a man whose scheme was going according to plan who set about conveying his wife's body to the cellar. . . ."

The tears running down his cheek, Mr. Tooley stuck to his grim task. The words of Clarence Hackey's innocent music hall song tormenting his mind.

*She thought it best, I need a rest
That's why she's gone away.*

". . . Methodically the monster set about his grim task of dismemberment. He had it all worked out. . . ."

"Evidence," sobbed Mr. Tooley down in his cellar. "I'll never get rid of the evidence." Fairy was a fine figure of a woman. "They'll never believe me. I'll never get rid of you, Carrie."

A song for every occasion?

*Just like the ivy on that old garden wall
Clinging so tightly what e'er may befall
As you grow older I'll be constant and true
And just like the ivy, I'll cling to you.*

Almost Fairy might have been looking down, down past the clouds, past the big birds, the eagles and gulls, past the little birds, the sparrows, larks and starlings, past the children's

coloured balloons, bouncing about in the bright blue sky, past Margate and Southend, past Gravesend and Regent's Park, right up to the wrong end of Elgin Avenue and down into her own cellar where she could consider her own lying-in-state.

A song for every occasion. Would this be her way of getting through to Monty? How would he get on without her? She couldn't imagine that life was going to be much fun for him with his little quiet one; and she knew just how she was going to put a stop to that. She'd have the last laugh. It wasn't all over. This wasn't the end.

Just like the ivy I'll cling to you.

She had never seemed more real, more omni-present to Mr Tooley.

"Go away, Carrie! Let me go! I didn't do it."

In a strange house in Grafton Street baby Keppel was frightened too. Papa and Mama had taken refuge with Mrs. Arthur James; and to her alien and exclusively adult household baby Keppel had been sent the next day. Mama was lying there in the cold, dark house; lost in her grief and only half conscious, and it was to Papa that the little girl had to run when Mama looked at her blankly and without recognition.

Quietly Papa listened to her outpourings. Her distress at leaving No. 30 Portman Square, her unknown fears of the preceding day. Her awe of Mrs. James' menservants; her dark bedroom; her terror at Mama's non-recognition. Again and again she inveighed against Kingy's death, which had changed all their lives. Resentfully she asked, "Why does it matter so much, Kingy dying?"

"Poor little girl," she remembers Papa saying, "it must have been very frightening for you. And for all of us for that matter. Nothing will ever be quite the same again. Because Kingy was such a wonderful man."

"... Meanwhile in Elgin Avenue the day wore on, and who knows, perhaps this monster, this seemingly meek monster, began to relish his task. . . ."

A song for every occasion?

I finish 'em off!

Finish 'em off!

Absolutely great. . . !

The memory of Clarence Hackey's song brought an anguished cry from Mr. Tooley down there in the cellar.

"I can't finish it. I can't do it." His body shook with sobs and then he pulled himself together. "Must do it. Must do it."

Two months of cancellations; two months of postponements. There would be an end to entertainment generally for two two months. Charity matinees carefully arranged were hastily cancelled; and no Army Pageant, no Ranelagh, no Hurlingham, no Epsom, to speak of, a black Ascot and weddings so private as to be almost secret. How disappointed the Selby-Bigges must have been when their dance was postponed; so must Mrs. Arthur Rose; what a triste trio Lady Fairbairn, Mrs. Huttoncroft and Mrs. Francis Foley must have made on the abandonment of their At Homes; Mrs. Hartford Platts missed her concert and Mr. Graham-White, a banquet of honour (well-^{tried}, Graham-White!). In spite of all their training there was to be many a chap-fallen face among the educated women workers who had to miss their fund-raising meeting at No. 50 Sussex Gardens; surrounded by such sorrow what expatriate Italian, domiciled in Soho, could find the heart to turn up at a banquet to commemorate Garibaldi's landing at Marsala. Of course they cancelled it; and of course they cancelled the Royal Gardeners' Orphan's Fund dinner; and of course they cancelled the Tin Plate Makers Company dinner at the Whitehall rooms. But we are happy to record that Witty Watty Walton, who had

been engaged to entertain the guests after dinner, got his guinea. But of course.

He spent it at the Salisbury buying a few brandies for C. Easthope Warrender, who had still to get over the shock of finding out that his non-speaking appearance at the Tivoli, which ended last week, had done him out of his unemployment benefit at the Westminster Labour Exchange.

Two months without social life. Two weeks without theatres. It was a blank prospect. But the Society of West End Theatre Managers had met at No. 60 St. Martin's Lane to look it in the face. George Alexander was in the chair, and round the gloomy table sat Sir Charles Wyndham, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Sir John Hare, Mr. George Edwardes, Mr. Arthur Collins, Mr. Robert Courtneidge, Mr. Lewis Waller, Mr. J. M. Gatti, Mr. Fred Terry, Mr. Edward Terry, Mr. Arthur Bourchier, Mr. H. B. Irving, Mr. Charles Hawtrey, Mr. Frederick Melville and Mr. J. E. Vedrenne. With only one dissentient vote they decided to stay closed until the day after the funeral, and they would have done, if they had not received a telegram from the King pointing out that since such a large number of people would be thrown out of employment he wished the theatres to reopen the next day and to stay open, except on the day of the funeral, which was to take place a fortnight hence.

Witty Watty and C. Weldon Atherstone received the news with joy. They had a drink on it. And then they remembered. They weren't in work anyway.

"We do not know, for we were not there to see, Gentlemen of the Jury; but we can tell ourselves with awful certainty that by the end of the day much of Mr. Tooley's fearful task had been concluded. What could be burnt had been consigned to the kitchen range. Carefully the little man fed the flames. . . ."

"I can't do it; I've got to do it," Mr. Tooley's voice had become a determined whisper. "I must do it."

A song for every occasion?

Up she goes! Up she goes!
Ease her, stop her, that is your one refrain.
But before you can say "Hello! Hello!"
Up she goes again!

Perhaps at this moment Mr. Tooley was a little mad. But it was a madness that would pass with the smoke and the flames; pass and leave a dull ache behind. Mr. Tooley knew that he would have need of his wits and he tugged them back:

"Quiet. Quiet. Quiet."

All down the Mall from Admiralty Arch to Buckingham Palace, the crowds stood quietly waiting for they did not know what. Some of them had seen their new King George V and Queen Mary beside him, very pale but stately, drive over from Marlborough House, but no one could tell when they would be driving back. They had bought as many memorial cards from the hawkers who passed continually among them as their pockets would contain. They had bought picture postcards and a memorial handkerchief with a portrait of Edward the Peacemaker surrounded by a vivid floral border. The hawkers had also done a brisk trade in Royal mourning colours—a bow of white and purple ribbons.

That part of the crowd furthest away from the Palace was the first to hear the advancing strains of "Oh God our help in ages past" and to part to let through "Major" Frank Barrat and his Salvation Army Band on the way to the Palace. They had asked Queen Alexandra if they might play in the Palace Courtyard as a tribute to the dead King, and she had expressed herself deeply touched. As they passed through the gates she looked up from the letter that she was composing with the help of Sir Dighton Probyn and the support of Miss Charlotte Knollys. Her sad mouth almost smiled as they struck up his favourite hymn, "Nearer my God to Thee", and then she bent again to her

work. It was a letter to those she had come to look on as her people:

"From the depth of my poor broken heart, I wish to express to the whole nation my deepfelt thanks for all their touching sympathy in my overwhelming sorrow and unspeakable anguish. Not alone have I lost everything in Him, my beloved Husband, but the nation too, has suffered an irreparable loss by their best friend, Father and Sovereign, thus suddenly called away. May God give us all His Divine Help to bear this heaviest of Crosses which He has seen fit to lay upon us. His will be done. Give me a thought in your prayers which will comfort and sustain me in all I have to go through. . . .

. . . . I confide my dear Son into your care, who I know will follow in his dear Father's footsteps; begging you to show him the same loyalty and devotion you showed his dear Father.

I know that my dear Son will do his utmost to merit it. . . .

"And daughter-in-law," suggested Sir Dighton Probyn gently.

"And daughter-in-law" added the pointed pen. Lady Charlotte wiped a tear from her eye. The Salvation Army Band had played "Abide with me" and "The Church's One Foundation" before that letter was finished, and were setting off through the gaslit dusk to "Lead Kindly Light".

"Alexandra" wrote Alexandra, as the hymn died away up the Mall.

". . . And what Mr. Tooley could not burn, Gentlemen of the Jury, he resolved to bury as soon as darkness came. . . ."

"Oh, Carrie, Carrie . . . look what I've done to you. Look what I've had to do to you."

A song for every occasion?

*I wonder if you miss me sometimes
Miss me when the twilight's nigh. . . .*

Fairy's voice seemed to be there, there in the kitchen with him; louder than it had ever been at the Britannia, Hoxton.

*I wonder if you know my heart is breaking
And I wonder if you care?*

"I used to care, Carrie, but who's going to believe me?"

"... Gentlemen of the Jury, I put it to you that Mr. Tooley cared only for the task at hand. He stood at his back window and looked beyond the dustbin to the laurel trees. And there in the garden bed beside the innocent begonias he selected the spot that was to be the last resting-place of Miss Fairy Felcher."

On *The Enchantress* off Gibraltar, the Prime Minister was writing up his diary for his young wife. He'd been awake since three that morning when a wireless message came announcing the King's death. "I went up on deck," he wrote, "in the twilight before dawn, and my gaze was arrested by the sight of Halley's comet blazing in the sky. It was the first and last time that any of us saw it."

They saw it in America, and Paris, and Constantinople. People came out into the streets to look at it. They saw it in Russia too, where its advent was regarded with the utmost alarm.

"... Monday morning came, Gentlemen of the Jury, and Mr. Tooley, with brazen effrontery, presented himself at the office as though nothing had happened. . . ."

It came as an added sadness to Mr. Tooley to learn when he opened his paper that his King could have died and he know nothing about it. A sadness, not a shock, so great was the shock that he had lived under for the last two days that it was doubtful if Mr. Tooley would ever feel shock again. Enough of this drifting. He really must pull himself together. He knew that he must make a return to life.

On the way to the office he realised that almost alone he had no black arm band. What tie had he put on that morning? He had not even looked at himself in the glass. This would not do.

He stood back to admire the black, white and purple ribbons in the office window. Dignified, rich, but nothing gaudy, very tasteful. Then he squared his shoulders and opened the office door.

"Good morning, Mr. Tooley. It only needs one look at your face to know it's Monday morning."

Miss Brecknock, at Chefs, had suffered an emotional disappointment when she was seconded to the Paris office for the month of August last year. Frenchmen weren't all you were led to believe, she had found out, and it had left her mouth pinched and given her conversation a nasty edge it never had before.

"Good morning, Miss Brecknock," said Mr. Tooley, his voice admirably under control. Have those berths been taken up for Constantinople?"

"Not yet. It looks as though we're going to be left with them. Did you have a pleasant weekend?"

"Not bad," said Mr. Tooley quickly.

Miss Brecknock sensed a certain discomfort. She leaned forward eagerly. "How's your wife?"

Something in Mr. Tooley snapped.

"She's very cut up," he said. He broke into hysterical laughter.

At No. 5 Boscobel Gardens Frederick Cooper-Jones was looking very stern. It was nothing that his Ellaline had done. The culprits were Adey and Co., 84 High Holborn. On this day of all days they were advertising in *The Times* to cigar smokers "who smoked the best". "The Cigars," the advertisement still said, "are supplied by order to H.M. King Edward VII." Adey's had been most remiss. Frederick made a mental note to get his cigars from Salmon and Gluckstein in future.

"Is there anything else in the papers?" said Ellaline, as much to distract him from whatever was troubling his mind as to satisfy her own curiosity.

Frederick turned over three pages at once and arrived at the correspondence, where Mr. Arthur Dakyn's letter from No. 11 Cheyne Row made him, if anything, more annoyed. Now that King Edward VII was dead, Mr. Dakyn wanted a return to an earlier form of words for the National Anthem. "God Save Great George our King." "The word 'Gracious' he pointed out, is hardly euphonic in any case, and when bisected by a long pause loses all claim to distinction or dignity."

"Damned socialist nonsense," said Frederick Cooper-Jones. "The fellow ought to be put down."

Up in Greenwich Park Fred and Ella hadn't even bothered to open a paper. They hadn't had the heart.

"It's the Queen I'm sorry for," said Ella. "The old Queen," she remembered.

"It's his dog I'm sorry for," said Fred.

Conversation died.

At Chefs, the travel people, the door opened and a customer, in a hat trimmed not surprisingly with ribbons of black and purple, tripped in. Mr. Tooley, who had only just collected himself, knocked over the advertisement for sunny Sarajevo; "Dinah!" he said, "what are you doing here?"

The little face pouted, as she bent over the counter to whisper, "You've forgotten, it's my week off."

"Forgotten. No, I haven't forgotten."

He looked around furtively. Miss Brecknock, who should be planning her go-round-Holland-by-canals tour, was edging closer, not to miss a word.

"I thought I'd pick up some brochures of abroad," said Dinah, gaining courage.

"But you're not going abroad."

"It would be interesting to see the sort of places you say

people go to when they're on a honeymoon." She gave a little giggle.

By now Miss Brecknock was very near. Mr. Tooley's manner became formal. "Oh well, I can let you have some brochures, Madam." Dinah giggled again. "Venice, Spain, Greece." Miss Brecknock had lost interest. "I'll bring them home for you tonight," he whispered.

"But I shan't be seeing you tonight. Mrs. Tooley doesn't require me."

"Mrs. Tooley . . ." how to put it? "Mrs Tooley doesn't require either of us tonight. She's away in the country."

My wife's gone to the country
Hooray!
Hooray!

"But had Mrs. Tooley gone to the country, gentlemen of the jury? We know that she had not. Then where had she gone? That was the question many people were to put to Mr. Tooley during the next few days. There were the Robinsons. They lived next door. They were used to seeing Mrs. Tooley every day over the garden wall. . . ."

Over the garden wall Mrs. Robinson was watering her lupins as Mr. Tooley emerged to empty the ash-bin.

"Oh, Mr. Tooley, I wonder if Mrs. Tooley would lend me her curling tongs. I'm going to Mother's tonight. It's her diamond wedding. They were going to have the neighbours in but in the circumstances," she patted her mourning brooch, a relic of grandma, "it'll probably just be them and us." She made it sound very uninviting. "Still, if Mrs. Tooley would be so kind. . . ."

Mr. Tooley looked at the little pile of ashes. "She's away you know, Mrs. Robinson."

He sprinkled the ashes around the begonias. And was it the May breeze in the prunus tree, or was it laughter from the bottom branch? He decided to ignore it. "She's escaped to a

little cottage in the country for a breath of air." And was it the billowing chemise hanging to dry on the line two doors away, seen fleetingly through the trees, or was it the slowly materialising outline of a luxuriant woman perched unaccountably on the bottom branch of the prunus tree, her shoulders shaking as she tossed her head with laughter among the leaves; whatever it was, Mrs. Robinson didn't seem to notice.

"Oh," she said. She sniffed. "She didn't say anything to us. But then she wouldn't."

"No, it was very sudden."

"You'll miss her, all alone in the house." Mrs. Robinson managed to conjure up a mountain of doubt out of the word "alone."

"Yes, Mrs. Robinson, I am alone."

From the prunus tree the song for this particular occasion rang out.

*"When there isn't a girl about
You do feel lonely.
When there isn't a girl about
To call your only."*

"Altogether," called the bottom branch, and the prunus blossoms joined in. Mrs. Robinson didn't, but then she had never liked music-hall songs. Or could the song only be heard in the mind of Mr. Tooley?

*"... absolutely on the shelf
Don't know what to do with yourself
When there isn't a girl about."*

"But, Gentlemen of the Jury, it was not long before Mr. Tooley saw to it that there was 'a girl about'. If I may use the expression, a very comely girl. Having tasted the sweetness of love once, Miss Green was thirsting to taste it again. . . ."

"Here's your fricasee, Monty." Dinah emerged triumphantly

from her kitchen. Yes it was her kitchen now, at least until Mrs. Tooley came back. "Now," she said, giving him a generous portion, "you must tell me what's happened. What's up with Mrs. Tooley?"

Mr. Tooley savoured the first mouthful. Delicious. He looked across at her and smiled. "It's all up with Mrs. Tooley."

"What do you mean?"

"She's found out about us."

"Oh."

"She's left me, Dinah. She's gone away for good. She's gone to Ireland. She's left us to our happiness together. I haven't told the neighbours."

"My goodness, I should hope not."

"I'm telling them she's gone to Ireland to stay with some relations. One day we'll marry, Dinah. We'll have to leave the district of course. I wouldn't want the neighbours to look on my wife as a sinful woman."

"Sinful!" Dinah burst into tears. "What would Mr. Perkins say? The Greens have always been respectable."

Mr. Tooley was on the other side of the table in a flash, his arm around her shoulder, comforting her; but then suddenly he realised that her sobs were not the main sound in the room. They were only the orchestration to a voice, rich and clear, that was ringing out from the chandelier.

*"I was a good little girl till I met you."
You set my head in a whirl.
My poor heart too . . ."*

it mocked.

"Carrie," said Mr. Tooley, "be quiet, Carrie!"

"Dinah!" sobbed Miss Green, "It's Dinah!" And Mr. Tooley remembered himself too late. "You're still thinking of her," said Miss Green.

"No, Dinah, it's you, only you from now on."

The chandelier swung a little in the stuffy airless room and the crystal drops giggled.

"Buy her something," counselled the chandelier. "That'll shut her up."

"Would you like a new hat?" said Mr. Tooley automatically, and so surprised Dinah that she stopped midway in a sob.

"What did I tell you?" said the chandelier.

"A b . . black hat," Dinah said, "for the f . . funeral next week."

"With purple ribbons," tempted Mr. Tooley.

"I wish that mauve would come back."

"It will," said Mr. Tooley gaily, "in a few months when half mourning comes in."

It was not only at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue that the influence of the supernatural was being observed.

Up in Greenwich Park it had suddenly dawned on Ella that that year Good Friday had fallen on Lady Day. Country couplets of untold significance were Ella's speciality, a dower from her Grandmother.

*"If Our Lord fall on Our Lady's Lap"
England shall have a great mishap"*

she quoted again and again.

And all that Fred could find for comfort was the fourth leader of a left-behind *Times*.

"Those of us who keep our heads will note the coincidence as curious and even impressive, and then go on to reflect that the impression is purely a subjective one, and that in the sum of things there must be many coincidences, equally curious, equally unexpected, and only not equally impressive because they make no appeal to the popular imagination."

It didn't convince Ella.

The day of the King's funeral. In the early hours of the morning

a great storm blew up and emptied itself of thunder, lightning and heavy rain, and then blew away as quickly again to give place to a glorious late May day, so that Edward VII's last goodbye to London should take place in King's weather.

The sun smiled down on all the black-clad people of England who had flooded in from the cities and market towns of the country to stand since dawn, silent upon the pavements from Paddington to Westminster. "The behaviour of the crowd," said *The Times* the next day, "was worthy of a democracy. It governed itself."

It was broken every few yards by booths and barrows hung with purple and festooned with black and white streamers. It bought black-edged programmes that were read and then tucked away in pockets to be read by grandchildren in years to come; grandchildren who would find them merely quaint and not the end of the world after all. It bought souvenir editions of the *Lady's Pictorial*, the *Sketch* and the *Graphic*, and Sir Luke Fildes' sketch of the King, made after death, for the *Graphic*, was much admired by the ladies who laid aside their knitting and their crocheting to look at it. It was varied, the length of Hyde Park, by thousands of soldiers in their undress uniforms, scrubbing and brushing and polishing and turning the Park into one vast camp. In the Mall it was fenced off the road by red and black posts; guardsmen who stood erect with only a space in the fencing here and there where one of them had failed to stand erect and had fainted.

At ten to nine the King on horseback, in the uniform of a Field Marshal with the Order of the Garter, and with Prince Henry of Prussia riding on his right, trotted out of Marlborough House followed by a carriage containing Queen Mary, the Duke of Cornwall, Prince Albert and Princess Mary. A few minutes later the Duke of Connaught, who should have been riding on his left, trotted up to the gates to be told that the King had gone, and so trotted penitently, if briskly, after him.

From Lady Wehrner's balcony Margot Asquith turned her

alert eyes on the seven foreign Kings, the Emperor of Prussia, the Kings of Norway, Greece, Spain, Denmark and Portugal, and the Tsar of Bulgaria, who had taken fourteen days to assemble and still had not taken to one another greatly. She liked the face of the Crown Prince of Austria the least, and the King of Spain's the best; but she found the Kaiser's the most interesting.

Some coaches down the line her alert eyes might have picked out Mr. Theodore Roosevelt in dress clothes; a great relief to the American Ambassador who had been in a state of considerable agitation ever since he discovered that the ex-President carried in his trunks the uniform of a Colonel of the Rough Riders; his great fear had been that Mr. Roosevelt might insist on riding alongside the Kings in this strange garb. In fact, Mr. Roosevelt had his hands full persuading the envoy of the French Republic, M. Stephen Pichon, in whose carriage he was driving, that the whole funeral was not a calculated insult to the republican states.

All eyes could pick out the King on his dark horse, Queen Alexandra, a vision of mourning beauty, dressed entirely in crêpe with a long black veil, and the carriage with Queen Mary and the young Wales children.

And few eyes were dry which saw the King's kilted loader leading a sad Caesar on the long walk behind his dead master.

In Margot's view Paddington Station, from which the cortège was to proceed to Windsor, was like the Ascot Enclosure. "It was closely packed with famous and dazzling people, their uniforms glittering with decorations, and all the fashionable ladies veiled and in black." Ascot by Beaton except perhaps for the small boy who fell through the glass roof while trying to get a better view.

Outside the Station the crowds were at their thickest, but Dinah Green had edged a way to the very front for herself and Mr. Tooley, so that he now had room to open his *Times* to the page on which Mr. Rudyard Kipling's poem, specially tele-

graphed from America was printed. Its clever avoidance of obvious rhymes appealed to the keen eye of a fellow poet, and with the sympathy of one also recently bereaved, Mr. Tooley read the poem.

*Who in the realm today has choice of the easy road
or hard to tread,
And much concerned for his own estate
Would sell his soul to remain in the sun. . . .*

These words seemed to have a particular application to Mr. Tooley, unable to turn back the hands of time and not yet willing to, really, if he could. He read on.

*. . . Let him depart, nor look on our dead
Our King asks nothing of any man,
more than our King himself has done.*

True to his penchant for driving out with fine women, King Edward VII was taking Fairy for a brisk spin through the Elysian fields. He halted his all-white de Dion Bouton above approximately Paddington and looked down. Down along the Edgware Road, Boundary Road, Praed Street and the approach to the terminus; and finally down through the hole in the pane of glass that the little boy had made.

"Don't think much of the poem," he said, "not enough rhymes; but Alex is behaving beautifully."

"So's Monty" said Fairy, loyally.

Eight

THE first of the June roses were on the breakfast table at No. 5 Boscobel Gardens and life was more or less back to normal, though Ellaline's dressing-gown was heliotrope and Frederick's tie-pin was a pearl. "For tears," Ellaline had explained when she gave it to him, and none the less real for being imitation.

"Where shall I take us for my birthday?" asked Frederick.

"Oh, Frederick," Ellaline's face flushed pink with surprise and delight. "I didn't think we were going to have an outing this year—in the circumstances."

"Perfectly permissible my dear, as long as it's good music."

What could be better than Melba at the Albert Hall, Clara Butt at the Queen's Hall, or Miss Edith Kirkwood at the Aeolian Hall, assisted by Percy Grainger at the pianoforte.

However, at the moment, Miss Edith Kirkwood was speaking on the telephone. She was trying to get through to the recording manager of His Master's Voice. If Clara Butt could

make a record, why couldn't she? But this she was unable to find out. The recording manager, the frigid voice at the other end of the line was telling her, was busy. He was supervising a session by the oldest recording artist yet to cut a disc. Frankly the recording manager had a problem. He looked anxiously at his new star, being wheeled through the doors. He looked at the parchment face of the ninety-year-old lady. Goodness was she dead already? But no, there was a decided movement among the many shawls as Florence Nightingale pushed them back and sat as erect as a good nurse should.

"Hand me my script," she said to her companion. "Would you like a level?" she asked the recording manager. "I shan't need any backing," she told him, "but a little echo would be nice."

The recording manager was too surprised to speak.

"Come along," said Florence Nightingale, "we'll take it from the top. Give me the green light." She started.

"When I am no longer even a memory, just a name, I hope my voice may perpetuate the great work of my life. God bless my dear old comrades of Balaclava and bring them safe to shore. Florence Nightingale."

"Now let's have a play back," she said, and listened intently. At the end the parchment face crinkled into a smile, she'd soon be back in bed in South Street.

"That will do nicely," said the Lady with the Green light.

"Hallelujah!"

Sang the Kilburn and Brondesbury choral society, more in unison than ever before. It gladdened Mr. Perkins's heart that he had repented his rash decision to abandon *The Messiah* in favour of a Requiem which had seemed at the time a more topical gesture and one which might put up attendances.

"Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I know we are making progress; but in these great strides that we are

taking towards perfection, let us remember to count our rests. Perhaps a little jingle that Mrs. Perkins composed for her sight-singing class will help us:

*"Choral singing sounds its best
When you stop to count each rest."*

Flushed by the praise that had been lavished upon them, the choir did not stop to titter. "We meet again next Thursday," said Mr. Perkins hastily, "at seven o'clock. Seven o'clock sharp, please."

"Miss Green," said the gentlemanly high baritone, "Dinah," he whispered more intimately.

The trim little soprano turned round. "Yes, Monty?"

Mr. Tooley looked very serious. "You've forgotten to leave anything behind," he said, and allowed himself the first wink of a lifetime

"Oh, Monty, you knew all along. Shall we go to the Bodega now—for old time's sake?"

A song for every occasion?

The figure standing under the lamppost as they emerged into the street sang it,

"Di, Di, she's not so very shy. . . ."

"No going into the Bodega tonight, Dinah," said Mr. Tooley quickly. "And no Brondesbury Villas. You're coming home with me tonight. And Dinah . . . ?"

"Yes, Monty?"

"Dinah, I want it to be for always. She's never coming back. Say you'll move in."

"Always!" said Dinah.

"*Always!*" sang the figure under the lamp. She put her arm through Mr. Tooley's free one.

*"Always
I will love you always."*

They made a bizarre trio as they swung up the road. How quiet the streets were. Him and her and a ghost.

*"Never fear my love is true,
And I'd give my world for you
Always."*

At the house at the wrong end of Elgin Avenue the happily unconscious Dinah ran in to turn over her turnover, leaving Mr. Tooley, with Fairy on his arm, to hesitate on the doorstep.

"I tried, Carrie. I tried to love you always; but then," he ended lamely, "there was Dinah. Can't you find yourself a fellow up there, Carrie. Someone to keep you company, then you could leave me alone."

But Fairy brushed this aside. "She's no good for you, Monty. She's only a little bit of a thing."

"She's quiet. She doesn't tax me. And she's alive."

Fairy levitated until her toes were level with the door knocker. To Monty it looked rather as though she was treading water. "Call that alive, Monty? You haven't lived. Come up here and try it."

"Oh no, Carrie. Not me. Not yet."

"Where's your spirit of adventure?"

"I was always trying to escape from adventure. I don't think I'd feel at home up there."

"That's just what I thought till I arrived."

In spite of himself and his problems, Mr. Tooley could not resist asking a very human question. "What's it like up there?"

Carrie swooped down again.

"There's only one way to describe it," she said. "Holborn Empire on a good Saturday night. You ought to hear those angels join in." She warmed to the subject. "You should hear the choir. Oh, Monty! I used to think you were a fool, but they've got a number. I'd give the other world to get my teeth into that song 'Hallelujah! Hallelujah!' They work it a treat!"

Mr. Tooley's face shone. "Yes, I should like to hear that, Carrie."

"But you can, Monty, you can. And you know that 'Messiah' you were always going off to sing—if you come up here I think I might be able to arrange to take you round to meet him."

From the kitchen came an accustomed call, "Monty! Monty!"

"I must go, Carrie! Coming, Dinah!"

Blast. Just when she thought she'd got him interested. "Monty!" she called frantically to his retreating back, "Monty, you could learn the harp."

"... So, Gentlemen of the Jury, Mr. Tooley and his 'mistress', for that is what Miss Green has become, now live openly together as man and wife, flouting society and the friends of their victim. . . ."

Montague Shearman sat up. "Mistress!" It was the first hint of spice they'd been given for some hours. He found his mind wandering off to that deliciously suggestive case back in January, when B. Sherek and Braff had sued *The Stage*. That admirable and watchful Voice of the Profession had commented in no uncertain terms on the conduct of the plaintiff's, agents who had booked Miss Mamie Stuart, whose real name was Mrs. Danks, into the Casino, Buenos Aires. Decent agents, *The Stage* suggested, would have warned Mrs. Danks that she might also be committing herself to appearances in Rosario, Valparaiso, Santiago, and elsewhere; that by the terms of the contract she was bound to go wherever she was sent in South America, that she was liable to be arrested, forced to return her passage money and forfeit her dresses; and furthermore this was South America, and it was well known that if an artist forfeited her dresses in S. America, forfeits did not stop there.

Montague Shearman had enjoyed comparing the evidence of Miss Kitty Lord, an artist herself, who had played the Casino Buenos Aires and found it perfectly respectable and correct; of Mr. William Wegner, comic juggler, who found it "very nice,

very nice", and of Constantino Bernard, an Italian quick-change artist who had never changed quicker in a finer house; enjoyed comparing their evidence with that of Mr. James Savile Foster, an actor called by the defence, who found it "a most disgusting performance—so disgusting that his wife had to leave"; of Mr. Gerald Christian, a business man who said that every woman artist who had appeared had, in his opinion, lost her reputation "at least as far as Buenos Aires was concerned", and of Mr. G. A. Wilson, a surveyor, who considered the Casino a rendezvous for women of loose character. He went once a week.

It had all been very strange and new and piquant for young Mr. Shearman, whose experience of passion was so limited and he had been delighted at the prospect of a new trial and of hearing it all over again, when the jury failed to agree, and he was desolated when he heard that the plaintiffs weren't going to bother to proceed further.

Passion in Elgin Avenue was a poor substitute, but keen student of the law that he was, he pulled himself back to follow Rufus Isaacs' argument.

"... How did Mr. Tooley explain the new chatelaine of his hearth and home to the Hackeys? Do not imagine that these dear friends were not asking questions. And it was not long before they called on Mr. Tooley. . . ."

There was Clarence Hackey, his brown boots planted firmly on the hearthrug; taking up all the fire as usual, or he would have been, if it hadn't been June. There was Elvira perched on the edge of the settee, looking round the room with those beady eyes to see what had come and, more likely, what had gone. And here was Mr. Tooley, cornered.

"Whatever has become of Fairy, Monty?"

"She's gone away to Ireland for a rest and a breath of fresh air between engagements." With practice he had got the answer pat, but Elvira was not appeased.

"It's a very long between, and not so much as a picture post-card."

"Oh, Carrie was never a one for writing letters."

"Have you two had a quarrel?" she asked point blank.

"Well, Carrie always was a hasty woman." Mr. Tooley was at his most confiding. "Generous to a fault, but hasty; you know that yourself."

"I must drop her a line, what's her address?"

This was a line of questioning that Mr. Tooley was not prepared for. "Address," he stammered. "Oh . . . a . . . a . . . a." He pulled himself together. After all, he was in the travel business. "Poste Restante, Killarney," he said.

*"By Killarney's lakes and fells
The land. . . ."*

A song for every occasion: but this wasn't it.

"Shut up, Clarrie. Mr. Tooley doesn't like your singing."

Not for nothing was Clarence Hackey billed "The irrepressible". "Nonsense. All on his own-io he needs cheering up, don't you, Tooley?"

Mr. Tooley seemed to shrink in the face of Clarrie's exuberance. He always did. "Everybody's being very kind," he said. But he spoke without enthusiasm, and lack of enthusiasm was always lost on Clarrie. He had his own.

*"I'm here, if I'm wanted,
If I'm wanted I'm here. . . ."*

The awkward moment had passed, the ordeal was almost over; Elvira had dropped her veil and was drawing on her black kid gloves when a new voice cut through the room.

"Monty! Monty!" Back up went the veil. The Hackeys looked at one another and their heads turned to the door where Dinah Green stood with the inevitable dish of food in her hand. Before she could say "Monty, taste this," she had seen her visitors, and what was worse, they had seen her.

"Oh, Miss Green's here. You are being looked after, Mr. Tooley. You'll want for nothing, I'm sure," said Elvira, bridling.

Miss Green put the plate on the dumb-waiter, but all she could say was "Oh." She and Monty looked awkwardly at each other.

"Time we was going, Elvira," said Clarrie, "sorry we can't stay to sample your cooking, Miss Green."

However, Elvira hadn't fearly finished. "Can we give you a lift, Miss Green?"

Dinah found her voice at last. "No thank you, it's quite early yet, it's . . ." she turned to the little watch pinned to her bosom, which was Fairy's present, and which gave her such pleasure. Elvira pounced.

"Oh, what a dear little watch."

Glad of the lead away from a difficult subject, Dinah plodded innocently into the next trap that Elvira was setting for her. "Yes, it plays such a pretty tune," she said. She pressed it and it tinkled.

"Yes, it does," said Elvira, remembering only too well.

Mr. Tooley could bear the tension no longer. "Well, I suppose you must be going, Clarrie, if you're going to catch your first house?"

Down came Elvira's veil again, but reluctantly this time. "There's no hurry, Monty, we're top of the bill these days you know."

"But the traffic," said Monty weakly. "More hansoms on the street each day, more growlers, more broughams, more motor-cars," he finished desperately.

Elvira was unimpressed. "You'll let us know when Fairy comes back?" she said. "Come along, Clarrie."

She hustled him out of the door and Mr. Tooley stood there watching them go.

"Come back?" he said to himself. "She mustn't do that!"

A song for every occasion. Through the fanlight it was coming this time.

*Come back love, I cannot live without thee
Come back love, why did I ever doubt thee,
Come back love, I cannot bear the pain,
Come back to me once more, be mine again.*

"I don't like the look of it, Clarrie, and that's a fact. If you ask me that quiet little Dinah has driven Fairy out of the house."

"I can't see it happening," said Clarrie.

Elvira put down her glass of stout with some decision and glared at him across the marble-topped table at the wrong end of the Café Royal. At the right end Marie Lloyd was buying champagne all round in honour of Bernard Dillon's Derby win, on Mr. Fairie's Lemberg. The folk at the wrong end reckoned it wouldn't be long before she was standing them drinks too, so they hung around hopefully.

"It's most peculiar," Elvira was saying. "Going away to Ireland and never a word to none of her friends and never a word to the manager. I mean an artiste in Fairy's position can't afford to play fast and loose with a management. You're not going to tell me she's Gertie Gitana."

Clarrie was getting a bit bored with this. "Who'd try and tell you anything," he said, not without justification. Fairy was Fairy, but he rather liked little Miss Green. He certainly liked her cooking. On the whole he thought the more of 't'oooley. Who'd have supposed he had it in him?

"D'you know what I think?" There was no stemming her. "I think she's left him. And I can't say I blame her."

"Maybe he stood up to her for once."

"It's not like Fairy to go off, all on her own to Ireland. She's that superstitious she can't bear green—and not tell us, and not write. And what about that watch pinned on where her bust ought to be? That was Fairy's. D'you know what I think?"

"You've told me six times. You think she's left him."

"I wouldn't be at all surprised. And it doesn't look to me as if he's missing her."

A song for every occasion.

"*I wonder if you miss me sometimes?*" Clarrie's rich baritone startled the wrong end of the Café Royal.

"Shut up Clarrie. There's Witty Watty Walton starin' at you over there."

In fact Witty Watty was staring into space. He'd had a great idea. He was trying to sell it to C. Easthope Warrender. George le Brun was supposed to be helping him. Mostly he was helping himself.

"We'd make a great double act." Witty Watty was saying, "I'm surprised I didn't think of it before. Conroy and Le Maire, Cantor and Lee, Williams and Walker, Gallagher and Shean, they'll have nothing on us."

"*Oh Mr. Warrender,*" tried C. Easthope tentatively.

"*Yes Mr. Walton,*" sang Witty Watty.

"It doesn't fit the mushic," said George le Brun. He blinked owlshly.

"Anyway, there's more to a good double act than a signature tune," argued Witty Watty, "you can write us one of those any day."

"Ish that a commission?"

Witty Watty proceeded to explain the theory and practice of the double act to C. Easthope Warrender, whose experience had been principally in the legit.

"You'll be the straight man, I'll make the jokes."

"Shay that again," said George le Brun.

Witty Watty ignored him.

"A good straight man is very important," he said. C. Easthope Warrender nodded.

"He must have a good appearance."

C. Easthope nodded again.

"He must dress well."

C. Easthope nodded, but a close observer might have seen him place a hand over one frayed cuff.

"He must have appeal to the ladies."

C. Easthope smiled modestly.

"He must have a pleasant speaking and singing voice."

"*Mi-mi-mi-mi-bip-bath*," routined C. Easthope.

"Very good," said George le Brun. "Letsh have another one. That's not a bad title—for a shong." He wavered an explanatory finger.

C. Easthope was starting to see himself in the cut-away suit, the grey derby, the two-toned shoes and the stock tie. He could see himself shooting his cuff after the gag, straightening his tie before the next one, slapping Witty Watty with his gloves—so much more stylish than hitting him with a newspaper. He could see himself giving his ballad in the middle of the act. Was Mr. Irving Berlin's new song "When I leave the world behind" too morbid? "*I'll leave the sunshine to the flowers*," he tried. A pretty thought. George le Brun scowled.

"What'sh the matter with an English shong?" he asked. "A bishycle made for two," he suggested generously.

But C. Easthope wasn't listening. He was raking the house with his mind's flashing eye to see which lady would flash back at him. He was glancing nonchalantly off into the wings to see how the serio-comique was taking it. Dashing straight men he knew were called brassiere-busters in the United States of America. He saw no reason why he should not come up to expectations.

"Of course," said Witty Watty, "we'll have to decide on the character of the act."

"I'm not playing black face," said C. Easthope with dignity.

"That's old fashioned," said Witty Watty. He dismissed it. "We could be a Double Dutch Act."

"*By the shide of the Zhuyder Zhee*," chanted George le Brun out of nowhere.

"We could be Double Wop, Double Irish; we could be straight and Wop, Straight and Irish."

"Irish and straight. Shank you very much," said George le Brun.

"There was a very good act called 'Irish by name but Coons by birth'," Witty Watty carried on valiantly. "There was 'The Mick and the Policeman', there was 'Two Funny Sauerkrauts', 'The Merry Wops' and 'The Sport and The Jew'. I could be the Sport and you could be the Jew. Are you Jewish?"

"Only a quarter," said C. Easthope Warrender defensively.

"Itsh not enough," said George le Brun.

Mr. Tooley could not sleep. He had not the resolution in his mind to get up and write a poem; in fact, since he had achieved Dinah his muse seemed to have deserted him altogether. He turned up the gas a little, but not so far that it would disturb Dinah, and picked up the *London Magazine*. He had already read Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle's "The Last Galley" a story of the fall of Carthage, prefaced by a "short and significant" extract which he found vaguely troubling, reproduced in the author's own handwriting at the Editor's special request, ". . . and they understood too late that it is the law of Heaven that the world is given to the hardy and the self-denying, whilst he who would escape the duties of manhood will soon be stripped of the pride, the wealth and the power which are the prizes manhood brings." He couldn't quite pin it down, but Sir Arthur made him uneasy.

He flinched from "Hillier's Love Affair" on page 349, for the first chapter had been given the unfortunate heading "Burning his Boats". Perhaps if he started at Chapter III which was headed "The Bultfontein¹ Imperial Diamond Mine?" But no, it was too late, the damage had been done, he could not concentrate. He turned the page.

"Can you stand the strain?" With everything that Mr.

¹ A hole to Bult to.

Tooley had undergone he was beginning to doubt it. He felt a ready kinship with Mr. Harry Harper, the author of the article. A sympathy for Mr. Harper's note of exasperation at "the never-ceasing hiss of steam, the vague rumblings and thunderings, the incessant clamour of human voices, the vibration of slowly moving trains, the rattle of motor-cars, the partly heard clatter of horses hooves, and here and there a faint whinny" when Mr. Harper had arrived at "a London terminus".

How quiet the streets weren't. •

The station yard, a scene of "Ludicrous confusion". With loud cries, crashing gears and grinding brakes. A host of taxi-cab drivers all striving to reach the kerb at the same moment. A sentence had formed in Mr. Harper's mind. "Can man stand the strain?"

The driver of the Renault taxi-cab "a black smut across his cheek, his eyes bloodshot, . . . swirling along the Embankment, flashing past, steering the speedy motor-car on its tortuous path to get ahead of those in front of it . . . one false move of the driver's wheel would have brought disaster, the skill of these men was marvellous, they averted disaster by a hair's breath, but again the question came to Mr. Harper "Can man stand the strain?"

Mr. Tooley shook his head in sympathy.

"A great office, the lifts shooting rapidly from floor to floor; the room of a chief of a department; a row of electric buttons lying to his hand; the never ceasing clatter of typewriters, the intolerable 'tinkle, tinkle, tinkle' of the telephone on the wall, appearing" to Mr. Harper, "as the last straw, devised by some evil genius to drive these purposeful toilers to distraction." "Can," he asked himself, "man stand the strain?"

Mr. Tooley sighed and read on.

"A thundering motor-omnibus, its driver a wild-eyed, oil-begrimed apparition; a motor-car driver hooting at me insolently; the plunge into a tube; strained apprehensive faces, close packed platforms, impatient throngs; a city man wiping

the beads of perspiration from his forehead, his eyes telling a tale of exhausted vitality." An impulse almost made Mr. Harper cry the question aloud—Mr. Tooley did. "Can man stand the strain?"

But Dinah only moaned a little and turned over.

"The aviators; the crew of the ill-fated submarined *Pluviose*; the famous comedian at the music hall, dashing through the streets in his motor-car, gasping in the wings after his last turn, almost too exhausted to walk back to his dressing-room; his face drawn beneath his make-up; his limbs quivering."

Mr. Tooley stopped reading. The last bit didn't ring true. He knew the music halls; more likely drunk.

The music halls. How he hated them. It was more than a month now since Mr. Tooley had been to a music hall; and in spite of his aversion they had become so much a part of his life that he found, in his nocturnal hour of self-examination, that he almost missed them. The liveliness and bustle had become so much a part of his life that in spite of Dinah's cooking and Dinah's loveliness and the peril of his present position, he had not yet taught himself to live without it.

He looked at Dinah lying there. Only a month ago it had been Fairy who could not sleep while he had closed his eyes and dreamed of turnovers and poems and ribbons and wished that mauve would come back. Now here he was wide awake, staring at the mauve ribbons threaded through a nainsook nightdress, barren of poems and suffering a twinge of indigestion from the turnovers. Why wasn't he sleeping? Why wasn't he happy? What was missing?

A song for every occasion.

*I wonder if you miss me sometimes
Miss me when the twilight's nigh. . . .*

"Of course I miss you, Carrie, in a way," he thought, "but you're better off where you are, Carrie; you're better off up

there, singing away as loud as you like. That was always your idea of Heaven."

Fairy had never played in a theatre where the cherubs on the gilt boxes were real cherubs. It was a novel experience to be applauded by caryatids and backed by a heavenly choir. So now, standing in the wings, she tingled with anticipation as she waited for her till-ready. And if Fairy was transformed, the transformation scene in which she was appearing was transfigured beyond recognition by ordinary pantomime-goers. Through a pearly haze of cloud, through the rose-pink mists of dawn, through the sparkling golden Land of the Sun, through the cool Halls of Starry Night, backlit by the moon; into the radiant and serene sky-blueness of the cyclorama, not a crease anywhere, Fairy, in top hat, her wings elegantly cut into the shoulders of her black sequined tails, would work her number.

And now the till-ready was ready; and Fairy came out to her applauding public, confident, poised, knowing how effective her generous black silhouette would look against the white and the silver, the pink and the pearl, the blue and the gold of heaven. Scarlet couldn't have created a bigger sensation than jet-black Fairy with her line of miniature jet-black imps singing lustily behind her, reproducing her every step with the precision of a Terry Troupe. Not six, not twelve, not twenty-four, not forty-eight, but ninety high-stepping little echoes. Fairy had got her picks.

"*Fall in and follow me,*" sang Fairy; and they did.

"*Fall in and follow me.*" She worked her cane and the picks worked theirs, and the only dropped cane made no sound against the fluffy cloud it fell upon. "*Come along and never mind the weather.*" Who would up there?

"*All together!*" "*Stand on me boys,*
I know the way to go.
I'll take you for a spree."

Fairy winked and the caryatids, in spite of the weights on their heads, twinkled back at her.

*"You do as I do
And you'll do right
Fall in and follow me!"*

At last Fairy Felcher was a success. The stage-door keeper came shuffling over, his arms full of flowers and diamond trinkets.

"You were lovely," he said, "and I've seen 'em all. Dick Burbage I've seen and Davy Garrick, the Great Kean, Madame Vestris, she did a travesty; Mrs. Siddons and Dan Leno, I've seen 'em all." There was a long pause as the old stage-door keeper considered these illustrious names. At last he broke it. "They was rotten," he said, "and the infant Roscius, he was atrocious."

"I always knew I could do it," gloried Fairy. "All I needed was the material. It's easy to get songs up here. Open the cupboard and help yourself."

A lady in a frou-frou skirt high-kicked energetically over to her. "Now you, keep your hand off 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay' said Lottie Collins, who had passed-over in January.

The two heavenly vaudeville artists confronted one another. The stage-door keeper stood back to watch. From the Royal box, Edward VII leant forward.

"Take a diamond tiara, ladies," he said, "each."

He hadn't been called the Peacemaker for nothing.

Nine

“Is there anything in the paper, Frederick?” Mary the maid had laid the breakfast table with their new Empire combination tea and breakfast service, which had pretty wreaths and bows, in royal blue and gold. It had cost 16 shillings (packed free) but it seemed worth having real china while you were about it. What’s more there had been free gifts with it. Cascade boilers in two sizes. It had been that or the dinner service (62 pieces, 21 shillings) finished in best English gold for 7s. 6d. extra, and with every set a handsome boudoir clock. But Frederick and Ellaline still had the dinner service they were given when they were married. To millionaires who could afford to buy both services there would be the boudoir clock and a pair of richly gilt vases, but that was just a crazy dream. The blue and gold sparkled in the window embrasure, it was such a lovely sunny July morning and the cascade boiler bubbled away. Frederick had gone out into the back garden to pick a rose before breakfast, now he was wearing it in his buttonhole.

Oxford had beaten Cambridge by an innings and 126 runs the day before, but Frederick manfully tore himself away from the exciting account of the match to find Ellaline's daily tit-bit.

Russia and Japan had signed a Peace Treaty which might be all right for Russia and Japan, but what was there in this for Ellaline?

In Reno, Nevada, a negro boxer, Johnson, had defeated Jeffries, a white man, and won 70,000 dollars in the process; this was a bigger purse than ever before because of the bids of the Cinematograph companies, who had hit upon the refreshing idea that a newsreel of a big fight might prove an attraction for audiences. What would they think of next? However, the aftermath of the fight made it unsuitable for Ellaline's ears. There had been race riots in every large city in America, led by whites who felt it necessary to take steps to see that "the negroes did not become unduly exalted". One would hardly like to bother a woman with these sordid details.

It was with relief that Frederick spotted the Civil List pensions and plunged in at the deep end.

"Mrs. Ellen Beardsley," he said, "is getting £55 a year in recognition of the merits of her son, the late Mr. Aubrey Beardsley, as an artist in black and white, and in consideration of her necessitous circumstances."

Ellaline blushed. She'd seen some of Mr. Beardsley's black and white drawings. She had blushed then.

Frederick hurried on, "Mrs. Constance Garnett, for the merit of her translations from the Russian gets £50.

"I like Marie Corelli," Ellaline said, which seemed to conclude that. She made no comment on the award of £50 to Mr. Edward Dinely for his labours in the compilation of a Gaelic Dictionary, nor on the £100 awarded to Mr. Richard Whiteley in consideration of the literary merits¹ of his works.

Frederick read down the sad list of widows of distinguished

¹ Durability does not seem to have been among them.

men, whom the King had delighted to honour and help. The widow of Professor Harry Govier Seeley (Geology and Palaeontology) £70. The widow of Professor Arthur Gamgee (Physiological Science) £70. Helena, the widow of Professor Stormont Murphy (the use of chloroform) £50, and Eleanor, the Hon. Lady Monson, the widow of the Rt. Hon. Sir Edmund Monson, Bart. (distinguished public services) £100. These pensions, given to the widows as much for the straitened circumstances their distinguished husbands had left them in as for the services these men of distinction had given to their country, would, Frederick was sure, bring a tear to the eye of his sensitive Ellaline. Had he gone too far?

He peered anxiously over the top of the paper, but her eyes were not spilling over; indeed they had a far away look.

"All that money," she said, "just given away. Frederick, could you advance me twenty-one shillings from my dress allowance?"

"Twenty-one shillings!" He made it sound like the whole Civil List put together.

"Well, Madame Helena Rubinstein, the Viennese complexion specialiste, is offering a new skin food invented by the eminent Russian specialist, Dr. Lykinski, compounded from rare herbs growing in the Carpathian Mountains, and you do like me to look my best."

"You're beautiful enough already," said Frederick firmly. "Pass the marmalade."

Up in Greenwich Park another topic of the day was under discussion, though breakfast, such as it was, had been eaten hours ago. After a series of trials over two years in courts of ascending dignity, costing many thousands of pounds, the King's Bench Division had finally decided that young Archer-Shee had not forged the postal order for 7s. 6d.

"There's nothing wrong with British justice," said Ella.

"Not if you can afford it," said Fred.

In the Courts of British Justice Rufus Isaacs was animadverting on the absence of Fairy Felcher. He stretched his arms wide and though the gesture was to the ceiling his keen cold eyes were on the jury.

"What mistress of a happy home; what generous neighbour; what conscientious, if not talented, artist; what favourite hostess and friend; what handsome, lovely woman would not leave a gap by her very going? Would not be missed by those she left behind? Gentlemen of the Jury, it was not, it could not be long before Mr. Tooley found it necessary to silence the enquiries of her many friends with more drastic methods. . . ."

And so it was that at a third breakfast table in London, the breakfast table presided over by Elvira Hackey, consternation reigned. Elvira had bustled in with a letter.

"Not much post this morning, Clarrie. One for me and nothing at all for you."

"Thank God for that." Clarrie got down to the eggs and bacon. No one fried a bit of bacon like his Elvira.

"It's a Kilburn postmark," she said.

"Fairy must be back."

"Well, it's not her writing." Elvira took the butter knife and slit the letter open. "Well I never, it's from Monty." Suddenly she stiffened. Her hand flew to her heart. "Clarrie!"

"What is it girl?"

"It's Fairy. He says she's dead."

Clarrie was round the table in a flash. "Here, let me see."

He took the letter from her. "All by herself," she said, "in Ireland. She never could bear green."

"Tooley says it was heart failure."

"Heartbreak you mean," said Elvira bitterly. There were tears in her eyes. "And she never said goodbye. She just went without a word."

"Well, that wasn't like Fairy."

Their bacon forgotten, they sat back mourning the fine figure of a woman that they had known and loved.

"The best friend we had," said Elvira quietly.

"She'd see you through thick and thin," said Clarrie.

"And we've known both," said Elvira.

"Her heart wasn't gold," said Clarrie, "it was better."

"She was kindness itself," said Elvira, "not always refined, mind you."

"She'd give you her shirt, if you let her."

"She was one of nature's ladies," they agreed.

Elvira remembered their evenings together. "She lit up at night."

Clarrie remembered them too. "We'd get her a bit tight."

"Oh, I wouldn't say tight. I'd say merry."

"Would you say she was stout?" asked Elvira, after a long ruminative silence.

"No, I wouldn't say stout," said Clarrie, "shall we say she was plump?"

"I'd say very," said Elvira.

"She was one of nature's ladies," they agreed again.

Elvira shivered. "It's all been so sudden. And that Miss Green," she frowned; "showing off in Fairy's bit of jewellery before she was even taken ill. You'd think she knew. You'd think she and Monty were somehow expecting it."

"Second sight?"

"It's not nice, whatever it is."

"Poor old Fairy," sighed Clarrie. "She was so full of life. That laugh of hers. You knew it was real. You knew she meant it. When Fairy opened her mouth she enjoyed it."

"She liked being with people."

"She liked a good joke."

"If a joke was too rude," Elvira reminded him, "she'd avoid it."

Speak prim of the dead.

There was still something nagging at the back of Elvira's mind.

"You know, Clarrie, it's funny, but there hasn't been any mention of a will. And she always said she'd leave her bit of jewellery to me."

"Aven't you got enough?"

"It's not that, Clarrie," her indignation made her blaze. "It would be something to remember her by."

Clarrie was remembering something else. "She sang a bit flat; but you couldn't tell her."

"There's a lot that's made more, singing flatter," Elvira pointed out.

"She was one of nature's ladies," said Clarrie, "though she did knock back the gin."

"If a friend was down on her luck, she knew just where to go."

"Even when Fairy was down on her luck too," agreed Clarrie. "It's funny, you know, death should take her away, when we thought she was takin' a breather."

Elvira had made her mind up.

"Clarrie, I'm going to have a word with Mrs. Blackett, her husband's a superintendent in the police. She'll tell me what to do."

"Why, dear?"

"She was one of nature's ladies. And it's my belief he done her in!"

"Oh, don't say that, dear."

But Elvira had spoken.

At his house in Hinde's road, Harrow-on-the-Hill, a turning off the road from Harrow station to Wealdstone, at the foot of the hill itself, the future Sir Bernard Spilsbury was writing up his card-index notes on the Crippen case. Methodical man, young Bernard. On the first card he wrote "Crippen—skill in evisceration—acquisition of hyoscine—access to text-books". On

the second he wrote "Mrs. Crippen—35—vivacious—good company—jewellery—fast life". He frowned. On the third card he described the discovery in the cellar at No. 39 Hildrop Crescent, adding to the gruesome medical details "Hair in Hinde's curler—roots present—man's pyjama jacket—from Jones Bros. Holloway, and odd pair of pyjama trousers. That ought to be enough to hang him," he said, and some months later it was.

The Crippen case had London by the eyes as the presses rolled out the story. At the Paragon music hall in the Mile End Road Witty Watty Walton and C. Easthope Warrender (his new straight man) were waiting in the wings to make their music hall debut as a double act (English and English.) They were reading the gruesome details of the discovery in the cellar to each other to keep their spirits up.

C. Easthope Warrender looked up from the gory recital of the remains. "D'you think the husband did it?" he asked.

"Remains to be seen," said Witty Watty, as they went on to get booed off.

"Monty?"

Dinah, part-plaintive, part greedy had chosen her moment carefully; not too soon after lunch, not too long before tea. "Monty, when I was dusting the bedroom I came across some brand-new stockings, lovely stockings in different colours with clocks on; and I was wondering if I could wear them. . . ?"

In the hall a bead curtain rattled ominously.

"But they're Carrie's," said Monty. "Don't you touch anything that was Carrie's."

"It seems a wicked waste."

"I don't want you wearing anything that was Carrie's. I want to buy things for you."

Dinah's pout changed to a smile.

"Will you buy me some clock stockings?"

"Of course I will."

"In different colours?"

The measured step that had been pacing up Elgin Avenue stopped and the door bell rang. Dinah rushed into the hall but managed to pull herself up to the dignity of a lady-of-the-house just before she opened the door. But she was back like a flash.

"Monty, it's the police."

"The police?" said Monty. He paled.

"Yes. I expect they're selling tickets for the police dance. Monty, I'd love to go."

"Yes dear, of course. Now you just wait in the kitchen."

Excitement always brought out the cook in Dinah. She skipped into the kitchen to change her mind about the semolina.

Mr. Tooley, white as a sheet, forced himself to go to the front door. Mr. Tooley prayed to Carrie not to confuse his mind at this critical juncture when he needed to be ice clear and calm. But he prayed without much conviction.

A song for every occasion.

*"Hello, bello, whose your lady friend?
Who's the little girlie by your side?"*

"Be quiet Carrie."

"Mr. Montague Tooley?" said the policeman accusingly. He seemed to fill the doorway.

"That's right; come in, officer."

"I've come to make some enquiries, Mr. Tooley. About your wife."

Mr. Tooley tried to look puzzled, "My wife?" He sounded calm; but anyone who knew him would know that his voice had gone up an octave.

"Yes, Mr. Tooley, where is she?"

"Come into my den, officer."

A song for every occasion.

*"My wife's gone to the country
Hooray!
Hooray!"*

"My wife's gone to the country, officer."

Dinah had had a finger in this pie and there was no mistaking the signs. The den was no longer a damp, musty retreat—it was no longer a retreat. There was bright yellow paper on the wall and sprouting from it pink rosebuds and blue myosotis tied with mauve ribbons. There were chintz curtains. Mr. Tooley sat at the desk, which no longer had a single drawer that he could call his own; not that this worried him, he no longer had any funny little secrets, only one dark heavy secret that he would give body and soul to be free of. He looked across at the police officer, spilling over the neat armchair that Dinah always looked so small in, to see how he had taken the news.

"What part of the country, sir?"

"Ireland. She's gone to Ireland. She has friends there, you know." Dangerous to tell the police that Carrie was dead. It would only arouse their suspicions.

"And she's still in Ireland, is she, Mr. Tooley?"

"Yes."

"When did she go?"

"Last month it must have been. Yes, that's right, just after His Majesty passed on." Mr. Tooley was getting bolder. "How magnificently our widowed Queen has borne her great sorrow," he said; but the policeman wasn't disposed to discuss his widowed Queen's predicament.

"And when are you expecting Mrs. Tooley back?" he said.

"Excuse me, officer, why are you asking me these questions?"

The policeman got up and looked down at Mr. Tooley.

"You've been telling people your wife is dead, haven't you?"

So that's why he had come. Mr. Tooley looked very sad. "Dead," he said sorrowfully, "yes, that's right officer, she's dead"; and after a long pause he added, "she's never coming back."

The new chintz curtains rustled, the new mauve serge drapes on the mantelpiece moved and a dainty china shepherdess fell

over. Clearly Fairy was finding her way round this new room in her old home. The sound of her song for this critical occasion beat and battered in Monty's ears.

*"Till the sands of the desert grow cold
And their infinite number is told.
God gave thee to me, my shrine thou shalt be
Forever to have and to hold. . . ."*

It seemed impossible that the policeman could not hear, but he showed no signs of hearing and certainly none of wanting to join in. Poor Carrie, that had always been her trouble. "Let go, Carrie, I've got to concentrate."

The policeman's next question cut across her last eight bars.

"When did Mrs. Tooley die?"

"It must have been sometime last month."

"Don't you know?"

"Well, you see, I wasn't there."

"Where, Mr. Tooley? Where did your wife die?"

"Oh, in Ireland, like I said."

The policeman closed his notebook. "Then I dare say you'd like to show me the death certificate, sir," he said.

"Oh, there wasn't a certificate." The notebook was opened again. "Only a letter. Yes, that's right, a letter."

"Show me the letter, then."

Mr. Tooley's mind raced. "I couldn't keep that about the house, it was such bad news."

"Mr. Tooley," the policeman's voice was very serious, "did you love your wife?"

"Of course."

"And did your wife love you?"

*". . . till the story of Judgement is told
And the mysteries of Heaven unfold."*

"Go away Carrie, if you love me go away."

"Till the sands of the desert grow cold!"

Mr. Tooley felt very tired. "Look, officer, I can see I can trust you. The truth is my wife's not dead."

"Are you sure this time, Mr. Tooley?"

"You see, it's like this. Carrie's left me." The words came tumbling out. "She's gone off with another man. She's a very fine woman and she's gone off with another man. I didn't want the neighbours to know. You see, it isn't very nice. I'm the sort they'd laugh at. So I said she was dead."

The policeman seemed surprised. "That's a bit . . . a . . . final . . . isn't it, Mr. Tooley?"

"But she's not coming back. Never."

"Women do change their minds."

"Not Carrie. She was very determined. Till the sands of the desert grow cold."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Tooley?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, it's just a phrase."

"All the same, Mr. Tooley, your friends are going to find out some day."

Mr. Tooley spoke with sudden passion.

"They'll never find out. Never."

"Well, they'll be making enquiries. What about when she writes to them?"

"By the time Carrie writes a letter, I'll be well out of it," said Mr. Tooley, but he said it to himself, or at least in reply to the mocking song from the mantelpiece.

*"She took her troubles with her
Hooray! Hooray!
I don't care what becomes of me
My wife's gone away!"*

"Are you still happily married?" asked the straightest straight man in America?

"Yeh," said the least comical comic, "I don't live with my wife."

"Cut!" shouted Mrs. Albee from the box of the Memorial Music Hall, Boston. She was watching the audition with her husband Edward Albee, Senior, who was busily building a chain of the finest vaudeville theatres in America. Beautiful marbled foyers hung with beautiful oil paintings, carpeted with beautiful rugs costing thousands of beautiful dollars; beautiful dressing-rooms with baths like beautiful hotel suites. He wasn't having dirt in his beautiful theatres and Mrs. Albee wasn't having jokes about wives.

"My wife's a very good shot," cued in the straightest straight man. "Why, she can hit a silver dollar at a hundred yards."

"Dat's nothing," said the least comical comic, "my wife goes through my pockets and never misses a dime."

"Out," said Mrs. Albee. "Put it on your list, Edward."

By now Edward had quite a long list of jokes that could not be used in his beautiful theatres. He had had it typed and pinned up in the dressing-rooms. It was becoming a good source of material for comics who left the Albee circuit to work in Burlesque.

"Cut business of girl raising skirt, saying, 'I'm a *show* girl'," it stated.

"Cut story of girl on park bench with man. Girl saying, 'Someone is fooling with my knee.' Man says, 'It's me, and I'm not fooling!'"

CUT "Mother and father are fighting."

"Who is your father?"

"That's what they're fighting about."

CUT Kaiser gags where he appears as a nance.

CUT Kaiser gags.

CUT "I like to take experienced girls home."

"I'm not experienced."

"You're not home yet."

CUT "I said good-bye to the train and jumped on my girl."

CUT "She thinks 'lettuce' is a proposition."

CUT "He's in the automobile business, he gave me an auto-

mobile last night, and tonight he's gonna give me the business."

Edward Albee looked at his notices with satisfaction. Now he could get on with cutting his actors' salaries.

In England, in the window of a room of her own stood a writer looking out to see the waves beating against the lighthouse; and as she looked, the clock struck and time and the generations began to confuse her, just as they confused Orlando. She jotted down a note on her pad.

"Who's afraid of Edward Albee?" wrote Virginia Woolf.

It might work up into something, someday.

"Dinah! Dinah!" up the staircase came Mr. Tooley's urgent voice. Up the steps he ran, "Dinah, I've got a surprise for you. We're going away. How long will it take you to put your things together?"

It was too much for Dinah to take in all at once. Colour came into the delicate china cheeks. Two blue-china eyes turned upon him, open to their widest extent. "The things I've got here or the things I've got there?"

"Both," said Mr. Tooley. "Neither. Oh, never mind. How long will it take you to pack a bag?"

The china cracked a little. "All right, Monty," said Dinah with some sharpness, "how long for? Where are we going?"

For a man who had dreamed of Vesuvius Mr. Tooley managed to make it sound very casual. "We're going abroad."

"Oh."

"The boat train leaves for Constantinople at five o'clock tonight, and we've got a lot of clearing up to do before then."

Dinah's world had its horizons too. Local horizons, local excitements. "What about the police dance?" She thought. She knew there was something. "And The Messiah?" it came out, clearly a bad second.

"Oh, Dinah, see sense, I've got two berths, we're going away together. We're going abroad." He held her limp hands in

his quivering hands, with a mixture of enthusiasm and fierceness. He glared into her eyes. "Rome, Italy, the Bosphorous . . ."

"What about my passport?"

"No time for that. You'll have to use Carrie's. She's on mine."

"But Mrs. Tooley. She's . . ." how to put it delicately, "she's well built."

"You can borrow her motoring-cap, the one with the big white scarf. Your face'll hardly show at all. You can pass for Mrs. Tooley." He gripped her hands again and pulled her down with him until they were kneeling face to face. "Dinah, I want you to think you are Mrs. Tooley. You are in all but church."

Dinah was almost convinced, kneeling there in the silence and then, as if someone had done it on purpose, the soap dish slipped off the marble-topped wash-stand and the tooth-glass shattered on the floor. She jumped up.

"Monty," she said, "I'm not going abroad. Living in sin is wicked, but to go on holiday in sin—well, I can't do it."

"You must, Dinah. You must. It'll be a happy journey."

"But why, when the police dance is coming on? Why can't we go when other people go? Why can't we go in the summer?"

It seemed a long time ago to Mr. Tooley that Dinah had said he was the masterful sort. He had smiled gently, proudly at the time, but now it was necessary, it was imperative that he should master her. He turned and there was something sinister in his aspect and there was iron in his voice, yet he spoke quietly as usual.

"You're asking too many questions, Dinah. Come here and kiss me."

"Monty."

"Kiss me. You're going as my wife."

"Mr. Tooley was frightened, Gentlemen of the Jury. Mr. Tooley was giving way to panic. It was clear to Mr. Tooley that the police were hard on his trail and that his only hope of salvation was to leave the country."

Rufus Isaacs paused and smiled knowingly. it was not just that he knew His Brand New Majesty was about to ask him if he'd mind being knighted. Mind!

"How different would have been Mr. Tooley's thoughts, how different his actions, could he have heard the police discussing 'The Tooley Case'."

The police at the Paddington Green Station couldn't discuss the Tooley case immediately. They were having a busy morning. All over Europe Crippens were cropping up. Even at little Vernet les Bains a man answering his description had been seen dining at a small hotel, wearing a straw hat, grey striped trousers and a worried and uneasy expression. He had described himself as a landowner of Valbonne, but before the net could close in he had left for Villefranche and Spain. Crippens were cropping up indeed. At St. Petersburg, for instance, there was one with snow on his boots; at Zermatt the suspect had only yodelled just in time; in Barcelona the Mystery Matador was rumoured to be El Crippen; and at La Bazouche Crippen twins bicycled by, two worried expressions bending over two pairs of handlebars.

All over England the British public had been taking its telephones off the hook to make its displeasure with its police force known. At Paddington Green the station sergeant was explaining yet again that they couldn't have brought the little blighter in before the body had been discovered.

"A full statement has been issued by Scotland Yard and printed in *The Times* this morning, sir," he added as an afterthought. He allowed an edge to creep into his voice. "Why not read *The Times*, sir?"

"I do," said Frederick Cooper-Jones, coldly, at the other end of the telephone line. "Every morning at the breakfast table."

The station sergeant put down the phone. A busy morning; and to cap it all through the door at the same time came the copper he'd sent to question little Mr. Tooley and a robust, red-faced, broad-shouldered cheerful parson who was triumphantly frog-marching a wizened little crossing-sweeper. The parson got in first.

"I've brought you a miscreant," boomed the Rev. Barnstaple, the Vicar of St. Johns. "He is a crossing-sweeper of no fixed abode. I caught him in the act."

"I was hungry," said the little man.

"Quiet, you!" said the sergeant.

"I found him lurking behind the church door," said the Rev. Barnstaple. "He had the alms box in his hand."

"I was hungry," said the little man.

"Quiet, you!" said the sergeant.

"A starving man," said the Rev. Barnstaple. "Robbing the poor box," he pointed out. "What does he think that alms are for?"¹

With the crossing-sweeper locked up and the Rev. Barnstaple on his way to sermonise upon the Christian virtues, the police could get back to the Tooley case.

"It was a waste of time, Sergeant. I felt quite sorry for the poor little chap. His wife's run off with another man and his friends won't give him a moment's peace."

"Poor devil."

"Mind you. One look at him and I'm not surprised. Fairy Felcher was a fine woman, you know."

"Well, we can't waste any more time on the Tooleys just because the neighbours gossip. You run up to the Park and saw a couple of suffragettes off the railings. That'll bring your quota of arrests up."

A busy day for readers of *The Times*; for yesterday had been a busy day for people writing to it. About fifty of them signed the

¹ The love of Allah?

letter on behalf of the Anti-Woman's Suffrage Appeal. It had been drafted by Lord Curzon and Lord Cromer and it pointed out in terms of unforgivable dullness that women were not yet fitted to have the vote and never would be, and, what's more, never should be. And it found an echo in the second leader of the paper. "This is a voice that will carry wide and far." Fifty voices in fact, led by the Duke of Argyll and the Archbishop of Canterbury, including two Chamberlains, Joseph and Austen, two jurists, Dicey and Anson; two actresses, Rosina Fillipi and Maud Beerbohm Tree, a great many ladies who were not actresses, among them Ethelberta Harrison, Violet Markham, Margaret Jersey, Georgina Max-Muller, Violet Montrose, and Jessie P. B. Phillips, a few more Lords and a lot of Misters with time hanging heavy on their hands, and finally and quite conclusively, Rudyard Kipling. One deduced that the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady, sisters under the skin or not, would be better employed on their backs than poppin' in and out of votin' booths.

The night before had been a busy evening out at the new Finsbury Park Empire. There, in an interior too spanking bright to be really *gemmutlich* to the customary patrons of the smoky, dusty, plushy north London music halls, and thoroughly lost in such company as Albert Whelan, Tom Leamore, G. H. Elliot, Gertie Gitana and Little Tich, the two halves of an extra turn were doing their best to convince each other that they were better than the lot of them put together. The task was made easier by the fact that they really believed it.

C. Easthope Warrender could imagine no personality more winning; no smile more *sauve* but infectious; no carriage more elegant, no technique for feeding a low comedian more assured; no voice more beguiling than his own. And Witty Watty Walton, for his part, could think of no material fresher; no timing more split-haired; no comic get-up more comic; no comic walk more comic than his. It would slay them.

Witty Watty looked out at C. Easthope, who was finishing his ballad. The smile, suave but infectious was in full play. It beamed up at the gallery for its applause. But the gallery's verdict was total and unanimous.

"Bool!" it yelled.

The smile, suave but infectious, side-slipped a little. No matter, thought Witty Watty, his funny walk would surely save the day.

"Bool!" yelled the gallery again, pleased with the effect it had had and getting into its stride.

The funny walk became a funny run. C. Easthope pulled himself together. He banged Witty Watty on the back with a newspaper. So much more effective than the sophisticated glove.

"What are you running for?" he intoned.

Witty Watty stopped, shook with terror, and turned round. "I'm trying to keep two fellows from fighting," he riposted.

C. Easthope hit him again. "Who are the fellows?"

"An Irishman and Mel"

Could this really be a silence? It could. Yet when he was writing the script he had inserted the stage direction "after laugh is over". But C. Easthope wasn't worried. He knew that personality, suavity, elegance, assured charm and technique would save the day. Bang! He hit Witty Watty again.

"Do you know what a miracle is?" he said.

"Of course I know what a miracle is."

"It'll be a miracle if they get a laugh," hissed the leader of the band to the first, and indeed the only violin.

"Tell me what a miracle is?" said C. Easthope.

Witty Watty circled him with his funny walk. It didn't help. "If you see a bull in a field," he said.

"Yes, if I see a bull in a field."

"That's not a miracle."

"No, that's not a miracle."

"If you see a thistle in a field, that's not a miracle."

"No, that's not a miracle."

"And if you hear a lark singing, that's not a miracle."

"No, that's not a miracle."

"But if you see a bull sitting on a thistle singing like a lark—*that's a miracle!*"

"Joe, get the hook ready," said the stage manager in the wings.

"Bill," said Joe, "get two hooks, it's a double act."

"Are you still betting on the horses?"

"I backed a horse yesterday, twenty to one."

"Did it win?"

"He didn't come in till quarter past six!"

"By the way, how is your uncle, the one that was so sick?" bawled C. Easthope above the catcalls and yells of derision.

"My sick uncle?" yelled back Witty Watty sticking valiantly to the script.

"Yes, your sick uncle." The smile, suave but infectious, had gone, perhaps for ever.

"The Board of Health wouldn't let me bury him."

"Why wouldn't the Board of Health let you bury him?"

Witty Watty took a deep breath. This could be salvation.

"Because he isn't dead yet," he said.

But *they* were.

And so it was that on this busy day in mid-July Waltrick and Warrender (English and English) found themselves at the General Post Office in front of the counter marked savings—C. Easthope Warrender's.

"Kindly hand me a withdrawal form," he said. Back to the Labour Exchange next week. That would be the day!

But the post office clerk was fully occupied on this busy day. She was attending to a meek-looking little man who was drumming his fingers impatiently on the counter.

"Here's your money Mr. . . ." she looked at the book as she handed over the wad of notes, "Mr. Toolcy," she said. "But

I'd be obliged if you'd wait and speak to the postmaster. You see these "E's" in the signature, in Caroline, Sir. They don't tally." She looked up from the page. "Oh, he's gone! Oh well, time for lunch, 'and me my 'position closed' sign Mabel."

She glared at C. Easthope Warrender defiantly.

"And so, Gentlemen of the Jury, all that lay between Montague Tooley and what he thought would be his freedom in the blessed sanctuary of some alien corn, was his last farewell to the house in which he had buried his past. . . ."

"You go down to the cab, Dinah. I just want to have a last look round." Mr. Tooley's voice betrayed nothing of his feelings. After all, you couldn't very well explain to your wife that you wanted to say goodbye to your wife.

"I've got the travelling-rug, Monty, and I've put out the note for the milkman."

"Wait in the cab then. I won't be a jiffy."

"Don't be long or we'll be late."

A song for every occasion.

"Don't be late, not tonight!"

Mr. Tooley looked at the darker patch on the wall where the wedding group used to hang. "Carrie," he breathed, "Carrie, I'm going. I'm sorry to leave you all alone 'cause I know you like company; but I've got to get clear, Carrie."

From the window where the breeze caught the muslin curtain and the sun caught the rising dust, Mr. Tooley and the shade of Fairy Felcher faced each other. Fairy smiled.

"Monty," she said in a quieter voice than she had ever used in life.

"I've got to get away, Carrie. I've got to disappear like you did. Nobody's going to see either of us again, Carrie. I'm going to the other side of the world."

The breeze stirred the curtain again.

"It's no good going to the other side of the world, Monty. You've got to leave the world behind. Leave the sunshine to

the flowers. Leave the springtime to the trees. Come up with me."

From downstairs the thin insistent voice of the thin insistent soprano called him back to the world, "Monty!"

"I'm coming, dear," he replied with the same flat voice that Fairy knew so well. The same lack of enthusiasm. Fairy saw her chance, but she hadn't the words. She tried to find them.

"*Come, come, come and make eyes at me,*" she sang in a voice low and seductive.

"I've said goodbye, Carrie." He moved towards the door, "I mean goodbye."

"*Come with me down Regent Street,*" she pleaded. She looked for a response, but his back was adamant as he crossed the landing. If only she could find some eloquence, some word that would strike a chord; but only those bloody songs occurred, the songs she knew he hated.

"Come into the garden Mont . . ."

He was in the hall and putting on his hat.

"Ain't you comin' out my Monty, yet?"

He was getting into the cab.

"Come back to dreamland."

The little bitch was in already.

"Come back love, I cannot live without you.

Come back love, I cannot bear the pain."

The shade of Fairy grew more frantic as the muslin curtain blew outside the window and flapped as she waved at the retreating cab.

"Come with me, come to the ball,

Come take a trip in my airship

Come and cuddle me."

The cab turned the corner. The voice was raucous and desperate.

"Oh Monty Tooley won't you please come home?"

But by this time the cab was spanking along the right end of Elgin Avenue carrying him to a new life beyond the begonias, beyond the neighbours, beyond recalling and beyond her help.

Should the Queen Mother move house? It was a problem that occupied Queen Mary's attention urgently during the long weekends at Sandringham. York Cottage had become far too small for the entertaining she was now expected to do and it was all right for George to make silly jokes about the servants sleeping in the trees, but they would be if things went on this way, and it was rather ridiculous for one old lady to reside in grandeur in that vast mansion while the King and Queen of England lacked room to entertain a single guest in proper style.

She put down the piano lid with a bang that made her lady-in-waiting jump. Together they had been teaching the younger children "Swanee River," "The Camptown Races" and "Funiculi, Funicula."

It made a jolly sound, thought King George V, coming out of his study all unawares that he was about to step into the full vigour of a wife in cramped quarters bent on expansion.

"George," she said, having banished the lady-in-waiting and the children, "we've got to do something about this house. It's too small."

"We can always put on another wing," he tried, not very hopefully.

"We've put on three already and it'll still be too small."

"We could sleep the servants in the trees," he gagged. He didn't get a laugh. Maybe it was his timing. He tried to talk himself out of the awkward silence.

"It's a very nice view across the pond, and I do like to be woken by wild duck."

"I don't," said Queen Mary.

"And I like to look out at the small, web-antlered Japanese deer roaming in the park opposite."

"I've seen enough Japanese deer to last a lifetime," said Queen Mary. She put her cards on the table "It's no good, George, we shall have to move to the big house."

Once the cards were on the table the simple, sailor King saw his course quite clear.

"Sandringham House is my mother's home," he said. "My father built it for her." There was no appeal.

"Mothers!" said Queen Mary, but she said it under her breath.

In the train to Dover Mr. Tooley could not wholly rid himself of a certain insistence, rhythmic, musical, at the back of his mind. It was almost as though Carrie was pleading with him still.

"Haven't the words, my dear. Haven't the words," the train repeated. *"Haven't got one word left, nothing occurs. Once I'd have jawed and jawed, Now I'm all overawed, haven't the words, my dear. Haven't the words."*

They sped through a tunnel and the lights came up and caught Dinah's sleeping face opposite him, her head against the carriage, her light veil up. Her tearful mood had passed and her face was serene again and hopeful. How unlike the message that the train was hammering into his subconscious. A poem that he had no desire to realise, no inclination to write down. A message from another world that he had no wish to receive.

"Gone with the world my words, gone with the world. Where is my good horse-sense? Gone and I'm tense. Once I could trust my heart, it's beating too fast to start. Haven't the words, my dear. Haven't the words."

He had always loved his poems; yet this one tormented him. *"Words should have told you how I cared, dear. I wanted the words that you find in a prayer, dear, but all my words are spent. There's only sentiment—means more than words, my dear, more than the words."*

The train jolted. Carrie's rug slipped off Dinah's knees as though twitched off. Still in his dream, Mr. Tooley replaced it. It did not break the spell.

"Haven't the words, my man, to bring you to heel. What do I mean to you? Not even a meal! Now all my words are spent, there's only sentiment, means more than the words, my dear. More than the words."

In her sleep Dinah moaned a little. Mr. Tooley blinked, wordlessly he bent and kissed her sleeping hand and the old lady at the other end of the carriage smiled to herself and thought what a sweet gesture and how happy the young couple must be with all their life before them.

She retreated behind her paper to give them a little privacy. How sad, nurse Florence Nightingale had died.

Ten

NO. 5 Boscobel Gardens, of course; the breakfast table, of course, of course *The Times* and of course was there anything in it? But Ellaline had to stay for an answer. Frederick had had a heavy night at the Toxophilite Society Reunion last night, and so was making heavy weather of his boiled egg this morning.

"What about Crippen?" asked Ellaline, who could contain herself no longer. Finally, after a great deal of furious but muzzy focussing:

"The Rev. A. E. Burgett revisited the gaol infirmary in Canada and offered his services to Miss le Neve, who thanked him and said she did not wish to see anybody this week "

"How dreadful!" said Ellaline.

"How understandable," said Frederick, who did not wish to see anyone either. However, he carried on gallantly.

"Miss le Neve has also received a cablegram from a New York Theatrical Manager offering a thousand dollars a week, two hundred

pounds, for an indefinite engagement on her release from prison if acquitted."

"If," sniffed Ellaline.

"That'll be a show worth seeing," said Frederick coarsely from the depths of his hangover.

Ellaline burst into tears.

Up in Greenwich Park Ella's reaction was equally shocked but less emotional. "Two hundred pounds a week for being a scarlet woman?" she said. "It's more than Mr. Asquith gets."

"I should hope so," said Fred, who was a Conservative. He turned the page.

"What's the Queen up to?" asked Ella, as though to wash her mind clean of sin.

"She's off to inspect the fleet with him," read Fred.

"*Oh, I do love to be beside the seaside,*" carolled Ella, a song for every occasion.

". . . And my wife is coming with me," George R.I. had written to the Admiral of the Fleet, and there they were together with the children, setting out for Torbay in the *Victoria and Albert*. For the first time since he had become King George V, King George V felt as elated as the next King. For the first time since he had become King he was feeling the swell of the sea beneath his feet. He looked at the boy to make sure he was behaving properly. His face was a bit white, but he was all right so far. They'd make a sailor of him yet, in spite of his examination results. "Breathe in the good air," he said; but only little Mary flung out her chest and filled her lungs as bidden, as the wind blew her hair from her shoulders and the gulls squawked dismally around the masts.

Full of anticipation, King George V went up on to the bridge, unstrapped his binoculars, turning the world into a circle. With the sun on the water, the flagged buoys bobbing

about, the land getting smaller and smaller as it receded, a bold yacht or two circling round and the cruisers *Achilles* and *Cochrane* in attendance, and with the prospect of a rum ration at sundown it was a grand feeling.

He put down the glasses and took a panoramic view around. It was a grand sight too.

"It's a grand sight," they said at Babbacombe where they were the first to sight the *Victoria and Albert* and *Achilles* and *Cochrane* steaming past.

"It's a grand sight," said the coastguards at the signal station at Daddy Hole Plain as the little convoy approached Torquay. As the *Victoria and Albert* sailed past the Home fleet, arranged in eight columns of battleships and cruisers, the guard of marines on the quarter decks presented arms, the officers on the bridge touched their caps, the ships dipped their colours and the King in the undress uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet acknowledged them.

The hills were green and the sky was blue, the whole world looked as though it had just had a lick of paint, and it was the last time that it was to look like that for the rest of the review.

For the next three days the weather was appalling. Exercises with the Fleet were out of the question and George R.I. who had so much been looking forward to ruling the waves during this brief, three-day holiday with the Fleet, did not know quite how to deal with the mute reproachful looks in the faces of the children and the unusually forthright comments of the Queen.

A miserable occasion climaxed by a lunch on the last day, for which no one had any appetite. Prince George of Battenberg tried to make the best of it, but Admiral of the Fleet Sir William May seemed burdened by a sense of personal responsibility for the bad weather which communicated itself to his lady; and even their daughter Miss Mary May found it less amusing than she had hoped. Perhaps the Prince of Wales's mind was occupied with thoughts of returning to Dartmouth next day.

It was going to be a new and, he feared, less enjoyable Dart-

mouth for the Prince of Wales. He was told to take civics instead of some of the engineering classes; he was going to take in *The Times* "which Papa said put everything clearer and more to the point" instead of the cheaper dailies which the other cadets enjoyed, instead of even the *Morning Post* and the *Westminster Gazette*, admirably balanced politically, but perhaps too provocative for an embryo constitutional monarch; worst of all he was going to miss the final training cruise and graduation which would qualify him for the dirk and white patch of a midshipman, for which he had so much longed.

But of course it was silly for a Prince to set his heart on things another man would take for granted. He had to attend Papa at his Coronation. The ship shuddered a little.

Ah well, perhaps it would be practice for his own.

The ship shuddered a little and Mr. Tooley put his arm around Dinah as they both clutched the rail and looked wanly out at receding Dover. After they had gazed, a little sadly, for a long time, Dinah spoke.

"I never thought the white cliffs of Dover would be so hite."

"Wave to them, Dinah. Wave your last goodbye."

"Goodbye?" said Dinah, horrified. "Whatever do you mean?"

"We're never going back, Dinah." Mr. Tooley's voice was firm and determined. "England'll never see us again."

Dinah was reduced to terror. "Monty, why didn't you tell me before? I'd never have come. What are you doing to me? I don't want to live abroad." She was quite desperate. "What shall I do for speaking?"

Mr. Tooley let go the rail of the *Wat Tyler* and gripped her hands. They stood there swaying a little. "You've got to trust me, Dinah. Trust me. I'm doing it for our good. I'm doing it so we can be happy."

"But you should have told me." She was sobbing now. "I

didn't say goodbye to Mrs. Perkins. I didn't say goodbye to anyone."

Mr. Tooley spoke wildly. "It's a surprise. I did it to surprise you, Dinah."

Dinah stopped sobbing. "You've done that all right" she said acidly.

"Of course, if you don't want to come with me Dinah we can put you off at Calais." Was there a hint of menace behind the apparent consideration? Whatever it was, it was enough to set Dinah off, all over again.

"Oh no, Monty, I wouldn't know where to go. And anyway, whither you go, there go I. It says so in the Bible."

"That's better, Dinah. You're going to love it. See if you don't. I'm going to teach you to love it. Just think, you're going to see the fabled coast of Greece, lapped by the warmest and bluest of seas; studded with quaint fishing villages and strung with a thousand lovely beaches of unexpected seclusion. . . ."

"Hark at you, Monty! You've got it all off pat!"

"You're going to feel the sea breezes off the Bosphorous. You're going to drink the wine of a Florentine vineyard and marvel at the leaning tower of Pisa. And you're going to see the Isles of Greece. 'The Isles of Greece where burning Sappho loved and sang'—while the money lasts."

"What shall we do then?"

"Don't worry, Dinah, I'll get a suitable position—after the honeymoon's over."

*"Wait till the honeymoon's over
When you leave Brighton or Dover!"*

A song for every occasion?

It was the familiar voice, small but raucous, supported by a chorus of gulls falling in and following one another round the funnel of the *Wat Tyler* which had been turned to coral in the setting sun; Mr. Tooley covered his ears with his hands to keep

out the wind violins; the seaweed cymbals, the celloing waves and the horns of the conch shells; he looked away from the coral funnel down into the sea, only to find a ballet of baby oysters and fledgling limpets come tripping in smiling and kissing its fingers just as the Conti children had tripped and smiled and kissed their fingers from Neptune's Coral Halls to the audience at the Old Bedford Camden Town.

*"Wait till the honeymoon's over
When you leave Brighton or Dover,
First you're aglow with love but oh!
You never know how things may go"*

the soloist sang.

"Hell!" said Mr. Tooley, "You've come along too." And he knew he was right.

*"Though you may think it's all over
Maidens and single men,
Just wait till the honeymoon's over
You'll know more about it then."*

Mr. Tooley looked a little green, but the starfish in Fairy Felcher's wand shone like anything.

"Monty! Monty!" Fairy had taken a header into the water and Dinah was shaking his arm.

"I'm sorry if I upset you just now, dear, but it was such a shock. You see, I've never been abroad. I've never been further than Brightlingsea before." Mr. Tooley made no answer and the little woman chatted on. "I went to Brightlingsea last year, and the wind blew my boater away and a gentleman ran after it and picked it up. I suppose he admired the ribbons. They went with my mauve blouse. I wish . . . I wish . . ."

"I wish! I wish! I wish!"

"What do you wish?"

"I wish to make a protest."

"Are you happily married?"

"Yes. I don't live with my wife."

"My wife's a very good shot. She can hit a silver sixpence from a hundred yards."

"That's nothing, my wife goes through my pockets and never misses a penny."

On the sands at Brightlingsea this year they were billing a special replacement act, Walton and Warrender (English and English). They bowed to each other acknowledging the absence of applause and exited to make way for the soprano.

Witty Watty had taken a long time to convince C. Easthope that he should sacrifice his weekly visit to the Labour Exchange yet again, and come down here and look on the whole engagement as a sort of nursery slope. "It will rub off the rough edges, polish up the timing, bring the act up to the mark, knock it into shape," he had said.

"Will it put money in our purse?" C. Easthope had asked.

"And sand in your shoes, boy."

"I don't like the idea of a pierrot show. I don't like the anonymity of pom-pom and ruff; and how do I shoot my cuff when I'm not wearing one?" he had said, remembering his finest trick.

"You could do a recitation," tempted Witty Watty.

"Not a bad idea," said C. Easthope, "Cry Gahd for Harry, England and St. George!"

Witty Watty had regretted suggesting that recitation ever since and now here he was again waiting for the soprano to come out of love's garden of roses so that C. Easthope could step once more into the breach, and bellow in ringing tones which still made the rain-soaked donkeys prick their ears forward, the passers-by on the promenade look out from under their umbrellas to see what outrage was being perpetrated below, and which still left unmoved the three children who constituted the audience, huddled against the canvas that they had crawled under.

Sadly Witty Watty turned the pages of his new American joke book.

"Double Blackface Act," he read. "One tall lanky 'nigger' type, and the other a small dumpy 'nigger' type who acts as a comedian while the tall one acts as straight man. Straight man enters ahead of comedian."

Witty Watty made a mental note. "Good opportunity for new funny walk." "Straight man speaks," he read. That would be C. Easthope's line.

"I saw you knock dat man down an' when he was down yo' blacked both of his eyes. The Debbil must have put dat in yo' head."

Now for his witty reply.

"The Debbil might have put it into mah head to knock him down but dem two black eyes was mah own ideah."

If only he could persuade C. Easthope to go into Blackface.

"There you are, Dinah. What did I tell you. Eight thousand eight hundred and fifty pigeons in the Square of St. Mark's. Count 'em and see if I told you a lie."

Dinah looked at St. Mark's doubtfully. You could almost see it shrinking.

"It's very different to St. Paul's, isn't it. It looks sort of foreign."

Venice was lovely that year. Lovelier than he who had dreamed of it so often had ever dreamed. Lovelier than even the guide-books had led him to suppose. They had two days in Venice and his specialised knowledge had enabled him to lead his Dinah off the beaten canal. Together they had explored the Alley of the Curly-Headed Woman, the Alley of the Love of Friends; the Filled in Canal of Thoughts; the Broad Alley of the Proverbs; the first Burnt Alley, the second Burnt Alley, the Street of the Monkey, and the Alley of the Blind.

They had adopted as their own the easy going square, the Campo Santa Margherita, with the little building that reminded

them of an English town hall and was once the Guild of the Fur Makers; the antique tower at one end and the tall red campanile of the Carmini Church with the illuminated Madonna on its summit at the other.

In the early morning¹ they had watched them unfurl the coloured awnings of the fish market and the silvery scales threw back the vivid oranges and scarlets and blues; and Mr. Tooley had leant forward to Dinah and whispered, "What is the oldest profession in Venice?" and thoroughly enjoyed her blush until he had told her the answer "Fishmongering"; and then her blush had subsided.

They had admired the stalls overflowing with fruit and the flowers that one saw in such profusion through all Venice. Never had there been so many florists and grocers and jewellers and wineshops and trestle tables piled with gaudy petticoats. It had even been a pleasure to pop into the prettily panelled apothecary's when Dinah had one of her heads and buy some *cachets fièvre* to soothe it and thank goodness that had driven it away.

Now they were standing in St. Mark's, "The drawing-room of Europe," he whispered, pointing to the pretty little chairs outside the cafés waiting, inviting one to sit upon them.

"Oh, you do have pretty fancies," said Dinah.

Napoleon had had this one first, but Mr. Tooley was not prepared to admit this. "It's nothing," he said. "You'll never know what this holiday means to me, Dinah, and that's a fact. All those years cooped up in Queen Victoria Street sending other people off to see the seven wonders. "And now I'm seeing them myself. And what's more, Dinah, I'm taking the eighth wonder of the world along to see them with me."

Mr. Tooley took Dinah's hand. Their love would last for ever. As long as the campanile under which they were now, and which had been for a thousand years the most indestructible

¹ A breakfast table in Venice: Henry James leans forward, "Is there anything in the Papers, Mr. Aspern?"

thing in Venice, surviving down the centuries the storms and the earthquakes which rang the great bells unaided.

All over Venice the clocks were striking four.

"It'll be tea-time in London," said Dinah, "proper tea."

"They serve cups of delicious chocolate here," he said, but before he could steer her across to a little gold chair at a little marble table he heard a rumble. Was it a distant drum roll? or was it the campanile beginning to collapse? Both seemed possible, for there on the top sat Fairy, kicking her feet to keep time with the music of the spheres and singing:

*"Is London like it used to be
Is the Strand still there?
Do the boys still stroll round the west
With its lights and glare. . . ."*

By now the drum roll, which was certainly the campanile collapsing, had drowned her. It had turned into a roar, a trembling of the earth and a mushrooming of dust which hung in the air as they watched, horrified and dumb and which, when it cleared away revealed that the whole huge tower had been diminished into a heap of rubble. "Polite to the end," as historians have pointed out, "for it did the least possible damage to the nearby buildings and hurt nobody. Venetians everywhere felt the impact through their feet and ran into the gritty fog of the Piazza, tears washing bright rivulets down their dusty cheeks at the vanishing of their beloved landmark. They found a curious sight. The deepest bell, the Marangona, lay practically intact; the bronze roofing of the pinnacle had made a fence to protect the three exquisite bronze bases for flagstaves in the Piazza and the enormous angel weather-vane, after riding down on the ruin as on an express elevator, had slid off the mound safely to land at the door of St. Mark's."

"Oh dear," said Mr. Tooley, not because Dinah had fainted but because he felt in some way responsible for the whole

business. And there sat Fairy, on top of the rubble, a trouper to the last, finishing her number:

*" . . . Are the girls as fair and beautiful?
Are my friends all right?
What would I give to be with them
In the Old Town tonight. . . ."*

In Old Venice things would never be the same again; in Old Vienna everything was exactly the same. The Danube may have been grey, but the Tokay was amber; the champagne was sparkling; the Hussars were resplendent in their best uniforms and they were toasting their Emperor. It was his birthday. He was eighty.

This had made no difference in the routine. He'd still eaten each course of his dinner before most of his guests had been served and most of his guests had seen their plates hurried away before they could touch the food, in accordance with the royal protocol which obtained all over Europe. Also the Emperor was keen on economies. Not that anybody minded. Everyone knew that once below the halfway line they were for starving, and so they all went to Sachers before banquets at the Hofburg and had a good blow-out.

Yet in spite of the birthday, in spite of the speeches, in spite of the toasts, in spite of his good resolutions to listen to insipid waltz after waltz patiently, the Emperor was longing to get to bed. Prospects were not as good as they would have been out at his Villa at Bad Ischl where he could have looked forward to creeping downstairs before anyone else was up and clambering around the mountains with no one but a gamekeeper to talk to him. Still there was the breakfast with Frau Schratt to look forward to. There she would be at five o'clock, dressed and smiling, by the time he had walked over to her little Biedermeier Villa near the Maximilian Platz. Come to think of it, he wouldn't need to wait till morning. All he would have to do

was to press the second clover-leaf button on the bedside table that she had given him and she would appear.

The French Ambassador was saying something to him. He mustn't let his mind wander. He pulled it back. He wished he hadn't. He told himself that he hated the waltzes because they were insipid, but in fact this was only his defensiveness. He hated them because they brought back his tragedies. A waltz for every sad occasion. A waltz when his eldest daughter died—so young; a waltz when his youngest brother died, so far away in Mexico; worst of all the treacle of Strauss when his son Rudolph was found dead in the hunting lodge of Mayerling beside the corpse of his seventeen-year-old mistress, Baroness Marie Vetsera.

"I am a pechvogel," he said, "a bird of misfortune."

"You were saying Sire?"

"Nothing," said Franz-Joseph, stroking his Franz-Josephs, "nothing."

On board the *Wat Tyler* there were no complaints about Strauss. They were giving a Ball. Mr. Tooley and Dinah had come up from below to find the ship dressed with flags and Japanese lanterns. Mr. Tooley had recovered from the feelings of guilt that the crumbling of the campanile had provoked in his breast. He was sure that he had escaped from the police and Fairy hadn't materialised once since that dreadful appearance on the rubble.

His mood was gay as Dinah tied his white tie.

*"Ribbon white, ribbon white,
I shall dance with you tonight."*

"Stand still, Monty," said Dinah, "and don't be so soppy." She had been having trouble with her hair ever since Venice. She'd had to wash it after all that dust and it still wouldn't crimp. However, by the time she was back on deck and the flags, and the flowers and the fairy lights and the music had

done their job she was as excited as a debutante, in days when to be a debutante was to come out for the first time.

"A ball on board ship." She took it all in. "Just think of it, Monty! Mel!"

"Does it make up for missing that Police Dance, Dinah?"

"Oh, it does, you know it does. Look, Monty, what are those lights over there?"

"We're just passing through the Gulf of Corinth, Dinah, of considerable natural beauty and redolent with prehistoric history."

Dinah remained unabashed.

"Give my regards to Leceister Square . . .," she started to sing. Monty spun round and shook her.

"Shut up!"

"Monty!"

"I never want to hear you sing those songs."

She had never seen Monty like this.

"Whyever?"

"They were her songs, Dinah. We've left the music halls with her. Carrie had a song for every occasion."

Dinah slipped her shoulder from his grasp. "Sometimes I think you loved Mrs. Tooley more than you knew."

And Mr. Tooley made no answer. He was trying not to hear the voice singing carressingly from the unflagged austerity of the life-boat.

*"Just a song at twilight
When the lights are low
And the flickering shadows
Softly come and go."*

Carrie never could resist a party.

Together, yet alone, they stood there in complete silence looking out to sea, while from the direction of the flags

and the fairy lights the band was playing yet another Strauss waltz.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mrs. Tooley," they jumped at the voice of the young ship's officer, "but your husband's drawn a number in the ship's sweepstake. Number thirteen."

"Ooh! What's the prize?"

"A bottle of bubbly. I have the honour of presenting it."

"Oh, I've never tasted champagne."

The young officer looked reproachfully at Mr. Tooley, "I've taken the liberty of bringing some glasses," he said.

"I'll never get it open."

"Allow me, Mrs. Tooley. Now you hold your glass steady."

With the maximum of effort and pop and in a flurry of froth the young man poured out. He looked at the happy couple. He felt superfluous.

"Excuse me," he said, "I've got to go and work the wireless. I'm the only man aboard who can. Time and the ether waits for no man." He departed.

Dinah cupped her glass in both hands. "Shouldn't we say a toast?"

Mr. Tooley was equal to this occasion. He raised his glass. "Here's to the future, Dinah. And all the places we'll be in together."

"To the future," said Dinah.

"To the past," said a voice from the shadows.

"And to home, Monty," said Dinah, "and all we've left there."

They exchanged a forgiving kiss, but although Mr. Tooley buried his head in Dinah's hair he could still hear Fairy's song for this occasion.

*"Is the old home in the same place
Are the same old pictures on the wall?"*

sang the shadow.

*"Does father still wear the same old trousers
Mother wear the same old shawl?
Have we still got the lodger in the top back room,
Still without a carpet on the floor?
Does the old tom cat
Still spoon upon the mat
With the ginger cat that lives next door?"*

It was September the second, and they had taken in the morning paper to a prisoner who had been committed for trial the day before.

"Another arrest imminent," the headlines screamed at him.
"That'll be Tooley, poor devil," said Doctor Crippen.

Port Said and journey's end.

"It's been a happy journey, Dinah, so happy."

"Oh, Monty, look at the little boys diving."

"One of the first features that meets the eye of the visitor to Port Said is the hordes of boys diving for money thrown overboard by the tourists," quoted Mr. Tooley smugly.

"Give me some pennies, Monty. I want to throw some too."
Mr. Tooley counted over the coins methodically.

"Only three?"

"We've got to go carefully now, Dinah. Until I find a suitable post. You won't mind, dear?"

"Sooner a dinner of herbs where love is," said Dinah fondly; but she held on to her last coin. "Will it be hard to find a job in Egypt, Monty?"

"Oh no, Dinah. This is our land of opportunity. There should be plenty of openings and I'm not afraid of hard work. After all, I shall be working for you."

Dinah gulped. Surely this was the perfect time. "Monty," she said, "you'll be working for all three of us."

Below, from a boat, they could hear a pedlar crying his

wares. Was it the wind or was it the pitch of his voice or was it Mr. Tooley's imagination that translated it into the knife-grinder's cry?

*"What's to be's to be!
What's to be's to be!"*

Whatever it was drove the sun behind a cloud for a moment, and when it came out again there was Fairy, right in front of Mr. Tooley, beckoning him on,

*"Baby, baby, close your pretty blue eyes,
Angles, angels, watch you from the skies my darling."*

"Go away Carrie. Please go away. I'm happy now."

In the customs shed there was the usual hubbub, and em-
branglement, and since it was Egypt the babble of European
languages was supplemented by others, louder, shriller, and
Eastern in origin. It was all very confusing for the mother-to-
be, and the father-to-be fussed over her as they waited at the
barrier.

"You sit down, Dinah. I'll deal with the customs."

"Oh, but I must count the luggage."

"You mustn't tire yourself, Dinah."

The passport checker looked up from the passport. "Mr. Tooley," he said, "would you mind stepping into the office." Polite fateful words undeniably in English. "Someone wants a word with you."

"Someone for me?"

Dinah was worried by the sharpness in his voice.

"But we don't know anyone in Egypt," she said.

"Come along, sir; this way, sir."

Mr. Tooley became aware of two larger figures standing at his left and right shoulders. "Just a minute," he said. "Dinah, you must go to the British Consul."

"But Monty, why?"

"Do as I tell you, go to the British Consul, there's a good girl. He'll look after you, Dinah, if I can't."

Mr. Tooley looked around.

"This is what Crippen must have felt like when they came on board for him," he said illogically. "Poor devil." Something between a frog-march and a can-I-show-you-the-way sir, the two men had begun to shoulder him along. "Monty! Monty!" Dinah's little voice called distractedly. There was nothing of the managing woman about her at this moment. The little woman who had, it seemed so long ago, left her music-case behind, was losing her man.

"Go along, Dinah, there's a good girl," he said from the doorway. "Goodbye."

And somewhere up in the dome Fairy looked down on them, half in triumph, half in pity, and forebore to sing the song for this occasion.

Eleven

IT was October. A good month for breakfasts. The mornings had sharpened and so had appetites. At No. 5 Boscobel Gardens the smell of kidneys and bacon was appetising and even Ellaline consented to nibble a rasher while she waited for her gobbet of news. What would Frederick find for her in the papers this morning?

He couldn't very well acquaint her with the constitution of the new Advisory Committee to assist in the censorship of plays. The news that Sir Edward Carson, Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Walter Raleigh and S. D. Buckmaster, M.C., were to be on it would not be out until November 10th. He couldn't distress her with the long description of the funeral of Count Tolstoy, *The Times*, and very properly, would not be printing it until after the Count had died, another event which would not take place until November. He couldn't thrill her with General Election reports. The General Election was fixed for December 3rd. Anyway, she didn't have a vote, which was perhaps as well.

The account of the unveiling, by Sir John Hare, of the statue of Sir Henry Irving at the end of—what a clever idea to change its name—Irving Street, would have interested Ellaline but was not due until December 6th. And though Tom Sopwith achieved his flight to Belgium in three and a half hours he would not even be attempting it until December 18th; the same date that his rival, Graham White, would fail to collect that tempting De Forest Prize of £4,000 and get himself injured in the process. Well tried, Graham White!

And since none of this exciting intelligence was due to electrify breakfast tables until some weeks in the future, Frederick had to turn over several pages before he could find the right tit-bit. He passed over the death of Prince Francis of Teck. He passed over the new wing to Lady Margaret Hall which Lord Curzon of Kedleston had opened with a few well-chosen jibes about the higher education of women, its wisdom, indeed its possibility.¹

There was, however, a choice of murders. Crippen or Tooley. Both rather sordid cases for two such shell-pink ears. Both displeasing yet exciting to husbands; each containing a word of warning to a wife.

"Do you think they did it, Frederick?" asked Ellaline.

The result wasn't out and Frederick wasn't going to have his reputation for infallibility jeopardised.

"That, my dear, is for the jury to decide."

"And so, Gentlemen of the Jury—Mr. Tooley's happy journey has come to its unhappy but inevitable end. His headlong flight from home, had re-awakened all those suspicions that his interview with the police had earlier allayed."

Rufus Isaacs took a sip of water.

"He's got 'em where he wants 'em," whispered Montague Shearman to his young friend. "They're trying to tell us this is a

¹ *Would you rather sin with Eleanor Glyn
Would you rather play with a lady B.A.*

case of great love. I am certain that you, Goddard, like any other right-minded person, will be filled with disquiet at such a notion." He was pleased with his words. He made a note of them and they came in useful in 1922 when he was summing up against Mrs. Thompson and young Bywaters.

Mr. Tooley never spoke to Dinah Green again. He asked to see her in his cell, but she refused to go to him. It wasn't respectable.

The warder slid back the grill.

"Hey!" he wheezed; "you!" he grunted; "Marshall 'all's comin' in to see you this afternoon."

Mr. Tooley seemed hardly to hear. "Dinah hasn't come," he said to himself.

"You're lucky" the warder foghorned, his voice like a squeeze-box with a hole in it. "If anybody can get you off, it's Marshall Hall."

One thought drummed ceaselessly upon Mr. Tooley's mind.

"She didn't come yesterday. She hasn't answered my letter."

"Of course, it's a good job you poisoned her first. He's very good on poison is Marshall Hall. Lives on it."

"She won't come. Dinah won't come."

Every cell has a silver lining.

*"Let us be sweethearts again love,
Let us be sweethearts again."*

"Thank you for forgiving me, Carrie."

"Off his head, poor bloke," thought the warder as he clanged the grille shut. "Marshall Hall won't like that. Take away the glory of an acquittal." His footsteps shuffled away down the interminable corridor.

"She wouldn't forgive me. She wouldn't. She was a good little girl, till she met me."

"Monty. Monty."

Mr. Tooley raised his head from his arms. There was a

radiance unusual in a prison cell as Fairy, mother, wife, and vulnerable victim, rocked him in the cradle that was his truckle bed.

"Don't be late," she pleaded. "Not tonight," in the voice that she had always used when she longed for him to be nice to her when he came upstairs. "When the brass sounds off and the cymbals tinkle, I'll be there," she said; and Mr. Tooley knew that she would be. "When they open up the gate, I'll be there. That's the moment when I shall live again, if you leave me with any breath to spare. Oh, Monty! When you come home, till the cows come home," her voice dropped to a whisper, "I'll be there. When the joy bursts out with a Hallelujah, don't you fear. I'll be there. You know I look my best, in my samite dress. Samite's all I ever wear." She couldn't resist the swank. "You'll be proud of me, Monty, in my burnished wings, you needn't be afraid, my dear, I'll be there."

"Dinah didn't come," said Mr. Tooley.

"Well, you wouldn't expect her to," said the partisan mother, "she's cold." "You wouldn't expect her to," said the wronged wife, "she's quiet but she's bold". "You wouldn't expect her to," said the rival, "she's mean; her lips are thin; she's up to tricks; besides all that, Monty, don't you see, she's alive!"

Now the wife, mother, rival, summoned all her resources so that her man shouldn't make her look a fool when he arrived to meet her before all the hosts of heaven and King Edward VII. "Will you please look pleased, when I squeeze your hand, Monty dear. Don't you let me down, with those angels all around. They'll all be there. And when you come back, all the words'll come back and we'll be there, you and me, we'll be there."

The form of Carrie faded, but to Mr. Tooley she was still rocking the cradle. "Monty!" she called "Monty!"

"You know best, Carrie. You always knew what was best for me."

"See you tomorrow, Fairy," said King Edward VII. "Same time, same cloud."

"I don't know about that," said Fairy. "I'm expecting my husband."

"Prisoner at the Bar, you have been found guilty. Have you anything to say?"

The little man in the dock looked up to a point above the Judge's head; above Elvira Hackey's black bird of paradise hat which perched in the public seats. Above the figure of Justice with her scales of stone on the dome of the Old Bailey; above the clouds and into empirium. He spoke quietly, quite confidently, to someone who was not the judge.

"Coming, Carrie," he said.

Almost he sounded relieved.

And at Greenwich Park Ella turned a troubled face upon her Fred. "Poor little devil, I don't believe he done it," she said.

"We've got to protect our women," said Fred.